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# **CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEPALESE STUDIES**



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# contributions to nepalese studies

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## Contents

|                                                                                                   | <u>Page</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. The Ancestors of Jang Bahadur Rana: History,<br>Propaganda and Legend<br>... .. John Whelpton  | 161 - 192   |
| 2. Field Studies of Energy Expenditure - Logistics<br>and Contributions<br>... .. C. Panter-Brick | 193 - 206   |
| 3. पाल्पाका सेन राजाहरूका अठाइ अप्रकाशित<br>पत्रहरू<br>... .. टेकबहादुर श्रेष्ठ                   | २०७ - २२८   |
| 4. बज्रवाराही जात्रा: एक परिचय<br>... .. सुशीला मानन्धर                                           | २२९ - २३८   |

### Research Note

|                                                                                                         |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| A Note on the Religious Beliefs and Practices<br>Among the Chepang of Nepal<br>... .. Ganesh Man Gurung | 239 - 246 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|

### Book Review

Diana Paul: *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in the Mahāyāna Tradition.*

Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock (eds.): *Women and Colonization.*

|                                                                                |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Eleanor Leacock, et al. (eds.): <i>Women's Work.</i><br>... .. Barbara N. Aziz | 247 - 252 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|

## The Ancestors of Jang Bahadur Rana: History, Propaganda and Legend

John Whelpton

### Introduction

In 1846 Jang Bahadur Kunwar and his brothers emerged victorious from the long power struggle which had followed the fall of Bhimsen Thapa, and for a century afterwards the history of their family and the political history of Nepal were virtually synonymous. It was not unnatural for those with such a distinguished present position to lay claim to an equally distinguished past, and this was officially recognised by the *lal mohar* of 15 May 1848 authorising Jang's family to style themselves 'Kunwar Ranaji' and asserting their descent from the Rajput rulers of Mewar, whom the Shah dynasty also claimed as their ancestors. Later sources present an elaborate family history, tracing the line back to the hero of the *Ramayana* and also giving a detailed account of the part played by Jang's immediate ancestors in the foundation and expansion of unified Nepal. This article will first examine the legends concerning the family's origins, then look at the Kunwars' role in Nepal's military and political history down to the death of Bal Nar Singh Kunwar. The primary purpose is the simple and straightforward one of putting on record the basic facts about the early Kunwars by testing the version presented by the Rana family historians against the other available evidence. By way of conclusion, a brief attempt will also be made to see what light is thrown on the value-structure of Nepali society by the 'useful past' which was constructed for the Kunwars.

### Family Origins

The 1848 *lal mohar*, as published by Satish Kumar (1967:158-9), gives the supposed Rajput pedigree as follows:

Among your ancestors, one brother was ruling Chittaurgarh, while the other three brothers, not seeing good prospects there, proceeded towards the hills. One of them became the Raja of Taklakhar (a place in the north-west of Nepal, now in Tibet), another went to reside in Jumla, and the offsprings of the third in later times settled in Kaski. Your great-great-grandfather, Ahiram Kunwar, came and lived in Gorkha in the time of our ancestor Nar Bhupal Shah, and (your) ancestors were called Kunwars until the present day. Now (since) I am pleased with you, it seems to me that you and your ancestors have been Kunwar Ranaji. Today again, I confer on you the caste of Rana.



A slightly different account of the Chittaurgarh connection is contained in a document which was made available to Daniel Wright, British Residency Surgeon from 1863 to 1876, and subsequently published by him (1877:285-8). This makes the family the descendants of 'Rama Sinha Rana', great-nephew of the Chittaurgarh ruler 'Tatta Rana' and grandfather of Ahiram Kunwar, and claims that on the fall of the fortress (presumably meaning its final capture by Akbar in 1568) he entered the hills and took service under the King of an unnamed state.

A more elaborate family history was published (in Hindi) in 1879, two years after Jang's death, by his former servant, Ramlal, who traces the line back to epic times and to Lava Vir, eldest son of Ram Chandra. In this narrative the departure from Chittaurgarh is placed in the 12th century, and there are seventeen generations, not two, between 'Tatta Rao' (clearly to be identified with Wright's 'Tata Rana') and Ram Sinha Rana. Tatta Rao supposedly occupied the Mewar throne for a brief period after his father and grandfather had fallen fighting alongside Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi against Mohammed Gori, and was then deposed by his uncle and sent with his younger brother to Bhilvara, some eighty miles from Chittaurgarh. Four generations later, one of the brother's descendants moved to Pali in Marwar, which appears still to have been Rama Sinha Rana's home before he set out for the Himalayas. The hill-state in which he then settled is named as 'Karsanga' and was presumably in the far west of what is now Nepal.

Ramlal's detailed narrative, with his frequent dates and lengthy genealogies, the latter sometimes clearly inconsistent with the former, cannot, of course, be accepted as historical. Nonetheless, some of the stories which he incorporates in the early sections of his work are of interest for the way in which they involve kingship, and, doubtless designedly, echo legends concerning the Shah dynasty. King Siladitya, for instance, who reigned at Vallabhipur in Gujarat, enjoyed continuous success in battle because his *divasakti* summoned to his aid from out of a sacred pool the seven-headed horse which drew the sun's chariot. He was finally defeated only when a treacherous minister advised his Persian enemies to pollute the pool with cow's blood and thus destroy its magic power (Ramlal 1879:4-5). Siladitya's youngest queen was pregnant at the time of his death, so delayed becoming *sati* until she had borne a son and entrusted him to a Brahman woman. When the boy grew up he was chosen as king by the local people, and the Brahman woman's descendants became *rajgurus* to him and his successors. When eight generations later a descendant was killed in a military revolt, it was the *rajguru* family who again looked after an infant prince. This boy was rendered invincible by the spittle of the *risi* Harit, whose disciple he had become. He set off to take service under the ruler of Chittaur, to whom he was related through his mother, and en route was given a sword by Gorakhnath, the patron deity of the Shah dynasty. In due course he became ruler of Chittaur himself (Ramlal 1879:6-10). In writing all this, Ramlal doubtless relied on a combination of his own imagination and the general stock of Rajput legends, but the result is still truth of a kind, because it accurately reflects the traditional

conception of what the relationship between Brahman, Ksatriya and divine power ought to be.

The simple core of the story, the Kunwars' descent from the rulers of Chittaurghat, could in theory also be true in the straightforward, historical sense. There is, however, no evidence to corroborate it, and no reason to take it any more seriously than any of the similar pedigrees devised for so many other powerful families in the Nepal Himalaya. In the Kunwars' case there is not even clear indication that they advanced such a claim before Jang Bahadur's appointment as premier, and Leelanateswar Baral (1964:112-3) has suggested that the whole story was invented only after that event. He argues that if it had been current, earlier mention of the claim would have been found either in the material collected by Nepali scholars or in the Hodgson papers, particularly as Jang's own son-in-law was a pupil of Hodgson's at Darjeeling. *Ex silentio* arguments should always be viewed with caution, and, so far as Hodgson is concerned, this one is particularly weak. The son-in-law, Gajraj Thapa, certainly knew about his wife's supposed ancestry when he and Hodgson were in contact, since this was in 1856-7,<sup>2</sup> eight years after the *lal mohar* recognising Jang Bahadur's status: either he chose not to mention it, or Hodgson did not preserve a record of the information. When Hodgson was amassing the bulk of his material, viz. during his time in Kathmandu from 1820 to 1843, the Kunwars were not sufficiently prominent for their family oral tradition necessarily to have been set down for him. It cannot be ruled out that the nucleus of the story was already in existence before 1846, though, if this was so, the claim was certainly not accepted by any other family: the wording of the 1848 document clearly implies that the Kunwars had not up to that time been regarded as Rajputs in Nepal, but rather as ordinary Khas-Chetris.

Turning from the examination of the Kunwars' legendary history, some conjectures on their real origin can be based on the name itself. The word *kunwar* derives from the Sanskrit *kumar*, meaning 'prince', and was used widely in India as a title with that sense. The name is a common one in Nepal, and may obviously have been adopted by particular families because they were, or claimed to be, of royal descent. In other cases, however, what may be signified is rather a connection with the Kanphata yogis, ascetic devotees of Gorakhnath, who had played an important part in the religious life of the hills since the 14th century, and many of whom were intimately connected with the political development of the *baisi* and *caubisi* kingdoms.<sup>3</sup> The title 'Kunwar' was given to followers of the sect who had not undergone full initiation, this being a natural corollary of the ascetics' styling one another 'Maharaj'. The lesser title was used in particular of children born to yogis by women in theory involved with them in the rites of the 'left-handed path' but in practice often simply their concubines. Many present-day Kunwars will be the descendants of such unions, in which the female partner was frequently a slave seeking to raise her status through association with the sect (Janaklal Sharma 1982:73-7).

Although members of a particular Khas-Chetri *thar* (i.e. persons bearing the same 'surname') are often spoken of as belonging to one 'clan', strictly speaking this is inaccurate, since the unit of putative common descent is the *kul* ('lineage'), several of which are found within a single *thar*. The descendants of Jang Bahadur and his borthers, together with the other Kunwars who were admitted to the biennial 'Rana Kunwar Divali' at Panchiyani temple in Kathmandu, belong to the Rana lineage of the Kunwar *thar*, and Khem Bahadur Bista has consequently suggested that it was their lineage name which led Jang's family to concoct the Chittaurgadh story (Bista 1972:104-5). There are, however, strong reasons for believing that the lineage name was changed after Jang's claim to Rajput status was officially accepted, and that, as assumed by Leelanteswar Baral (1972:111), Jang and his forbears belonged to the Khandka *kul*. As Bista himself admits (1972:43), this view is supported by the story told to him in Kathmandu of Kunwars who declared themselves as 'Khandka Kunwar' at the Panchiyani temple being admitted to the *kuldevata* ceremony. Secondly, in addition to being a lineage name in use in the present-day, 'Khandka', in the variant form 'Khanka', also figures in the Kunwar section of Brian Hodgson's 1833 list of lineages (1872:42-3), in which 'Rana' occurs only as a Magar *thar*. Finally, the version of Jang's genealogy given by Wright (1877:285) specifically states that for bravery in battle one of Rama Sinha Rana's six sons 'had the title of Kunwar Khadka conferred on him, by which title his descendants are known to the present day'. Ramlal (1879:28) gives a similar story, using the form *khundka*, whilst a modern account by a member of the Rana family (Phalendra Rana 1957:3) has *khadga* and claims the title was conferred on Rama Sinha Rana himself. All this leaves no doubt that Jang Bahadur was originally a Khandka Kunwar.

This conclusion perhaps permits a further conjecture. According to the traditional account of the 1559 seizure of Gorkha by Drabya Shah, the founder of the Shah dynasty, the previous king whom he defeated and killed was a 'Khadga' or 'Khadka' (Acharya 1967:1, 56-7). There is a conflict in the sources as to whether this pre-Shah king was a Khas or a member of one of the hill tribes, and it must be admitted that there is no necessary kinship with Jang's family since 'Khandka', today as in the 19th century, is the name of a completely distinct *thar* as well as of a Kunwar lineage.<sup>4</sup> However, if it is assumed that the word was once a dynastic name used by ruling families at Gorkha and most probably elsewhere in the hills, then possibly the Khandka Kunwars came to acquire it either as rulers themselves or as associates of rulers. They could thus, after all, conceivably be allowed a royal pedigree, though of hills rather than plains provenance. Their subsequent claim to Rana status, if not a straightforward imitation of the Shah dynasty's claim, may have been prompted by descent on the female side from Magar Ranas, whose origin legend certainly connected them with Chittaurgadh:<sup>5</sup> Khas-Magar marriage was common in the hills, and seems the more likely in this case because of Jang's own physical appearance.

## The Kunwars and Nepali History

Our sources conflict over the location of Jang's ancestor's earliest home in the hills, but all the identifiable places mentioned are in the far-west, and this, of course, is what one would expect, given the long-term west to east migration of the Khas along the Himalayas. Although it is uncertain in which generation it took place, it is with the settlement of an ancestor at Kaski, the *baisi* kingdoms centred on Pokhara, that the family's history can properly be said to have begun.<sup>6</sup> Here they were granted land at Dhungresanghu on the banks of the Seti Gandaki (Phalendra Rana 1957:3).

The abandonment of Kaski for Gorkha, all sources agree, was made by Ahiram Kunwar because he was unwilling to let the king of Kaski marry his daughter without full wedding rites. The king offered only the lesser ceremony of *kalas diyo puja* 'worship with pitcher and lamp'). Amongst Chetris today this is often used when the couple have cohabited before the ceremony, but it seems also to have been employed in the past where there was some imperfection in the bride's caste status.<sup>7</sup> Quite possibly the king claimed Rajput status for himself but regarded Ahiram as a simple Khas. Whatever the precise circumstances, Ahiram took his defiance to the point of fighting against his royal master when the latter came with troops to seize the girl. After the battle he left Kaski and was invited to Nar Bhupal Shah to Gorkha, where he, or possibly a brother, received a *birta* land grant soon to be known as 'Kunwar Khola'.<sup>8</sup> The details of this traditional account of Ahiram can, of course, be questioned, but he is himself undoubtedly a historical personage, being named in a document of 1799 to which his grandson Ranjit was a signatory.<sup>9</sup>

Ahiram had three sons, of whom the eldest, Ram Krishna, great-grandfather of Jang Bahadur, was twelve years old when the family arrived in Gorkha in around 1740.<sup>10</sup> Both Ram Krishna and his brothers took part in the long struggle which Nar Bhupal Shah's son and successor, Prithvi Narayan, waged for control of the Kathmandu valley and of the hills to its east and west. The account of Ram Krishna's exploits given by Ramlal, and reproduced in detail in the biography of Jang Bahadur by his son Pudma,<sup>11</sup> suggests that he was in fact the major architect of the Gorkha victory. In contrast, the standard account of the unification of Nepal, Ludwig Stiller's *Rise of the House of Gorkha*, mentions him only incidentally. The truth in fact lies between these two extremes, and Ram Krishna's contribution was sufficiently valuable to ensure him an honourable though far from pre-eminent position among the *bharadari* of the new state.

Prithvi Narayan's campaigning opened with the seizure of Nuwakot, a strategically placed town in the hills north-west of the Valley, on 26 September 1744 (Acharya 1967:1,227-8). The king's own brother, Dalmardan, took a distinguished part, although only twelve, so there is no reason to doubt the claim that Ram Krishna Kunwar, and his brother Jay Krishna, then sixteen and fourteen respectively, were also

involved (Phalendra Rana 1957:7). However, neither brother's participation is reported by sources other than the Rana family historians, and Ramlal's picture of Ram Krishna as commander-in-chief of the Gorkha forces is complete fantasy (Ramlal 1879:31-2).

It was not until fifteen years later, after continual struggles over strong-points north-east and west of the Valley and the first, disastrous attack on Kirtipur, that Ram Krishna emerged in truth as a military commander. The *Bhasavamsavali*, a 19th century chronicle, includes him amongst the leaders of the Gorkha force which captured the forts of Palanchok and Kabhre in January 1760 (Acharya 1967: II, 384). The chronicle gives him the title *jetho budho*, literally 'senior elder', a designation known later to have applied both to village functionaries with land revenue and judicial responsibilities and to a central government official who attended on the king, acting as a messenger and investigator on his behalf (Adhikari 1984: 114; Kirkpatrick 1811:202). Ram Krishna was left as military governor of the newly conquered territory, installing himself at the village of Bhamarkot. This was the beginning of a special association between the Kunwars and the hill country east of the Valley, and an official document of 1804 still gives the village as the home of Ram Krishna's son Ranjit.<sup>12</sup>

The capture in August 1762 of Makwanpur, capital of the kingdom of the same name straddling the hills between Kathmandu and India, and the seizure six weeks later of Timal, Sindhuli and Hariharpur completed the encirclement of the Valley. According to Phalendra Rana (1957:8) Ram Krishna fought at Makwanpur, and the *Bhasavamsavali* lists him among the leaders in the later campaign (N.R. Pant et al. 1968:843-6). Victory at Timal, however, was marred by the death of his third brother, Amar Singh, from whom the Kunwars in the districts of Dadhuva and Saglekhola trace their descent (Phalendra Rana 1957:8).<sup>13</sup>

At the start of the following year, when the forces of Mir Kasim of Bengal invaded the hills in support of the ousted Makwanpur ruler, Ram Krishna was put in readiness to move against him but did not in the event see any action (Acharya 1967: III, 419). He was, however, very much involved in the fighting which reduced the settlements between his base at Bhamarkot and the eastern rim of the Valley, and in particular the capture of the key town of Dhulikhel on 23 October 1763 (Acharya 1967: III, 424). Over the next four years he was engaged in maintaining the blockade of the Valley towns, and also for a time transferred back to the Gorkha heartland to help ward off any combination of caubisi states against Prithvi Narayan (Stiller 1973:123-4; Regmi 1975:I, 453).

Ramlal (1879:39; c.f. Pudma Rana 1909:5) ascribe to Ram Krishna a key role in the conquest of the Valley, claiming that he led the troops which in 1767 defeated the British force under Captain Kinloch attempting to relieve the beleaguered Newar kingdoms, and that he also headed the force which took Kathmandu itself in September 1768. On the former occasion he appears in fact to have been ordered into action only

after the main engagement near Sindhuli had already taken place, and he probably never even made contact with the retreating enemy (Acharya 1967: III, 418 & 487-9; D.R. Regmi 1975: I, 191). As for the entry into Kathmandu, the account in the *Bhasavamsavali* does not name any of the leaders of the attacking columns, and Ram Krishna's name is well down its list of officers commended for their contribution to victory after the capture of Patan and Bhadgaon had completed the subjugation of the Valley (N.R. Pant et al. 1968; 878 & 908-9). Nevertheless, the wording of a remarkable letter he received from Prithvi Narayan three years later suggests that he did indeed distinguish himself in the fighting. This was written in September 1772 when Ram Krishna and Abhiman Singh Basnet were establishing Gorkha sovereignty in the Kirata region, east of the Dudh Kosi. The surviving precis as published by N.R. Pant (1968: 1095) runs as follows:

When Kalu Pande was killed at Kirtipur, I despaired of ever conquering the three cities of Nepal, but thanks to your wisdom and the force of your sword the conquest was achieved. To reward you in proportion to your efforts not even half my kingdom would be sufficient. I have granted the (revenues from the) territory around Simbu and from Dhulikhel to be enjoyed by you and by successive generations of your family. Your brother's death at Timal was a great sorrow. Now the task of conquering the Kirata country is yours. Dated (1829) Aswin Badi 5 Wednesday (16 September 1772)<sup>14</sup>

Ram Krishna was thus put on a level with the illustrious Kalu Pande, Gorkha commander-in-chief until his death in the premature 1757 assault and ancestor of the 'Kala Pandes', who were to play such a prominent role in Nepali politics over the next seventy years. A few months later the king was to tell Ram Krishna in another letter that 'you excelled the other sardars in the conquest of Nepal (sc. the Kathmandu Valley) and of the Kirata country'<sup>15</sup> Such fulsome praise may have been partly calculated to encourage the recipient to further exertions, and the Kunwars, unlike the Pandes, Basnets and Panths, were not singled out for mention in the *Divya Upades*, Prithvi Narayan's political testament (Pokhrel 1986: 159). Nevertheless, these two letters, of undoubted authenticity, prove that Ram Krishna's military contribution was a major one. Had they been available to Ramlal or Padma Jung, they would have served their purpose better than the tales of imaginary exploits they present to the reader.

After the eastern campaign had concluded with the overthrow of the principalities of Chaudandi and Bijaypur and the establishing of Nepal's frontier on the Tista, Ram Krishna continued his military career in the west. He survived Prithvi Narayan, who died in January 1775, and served his son Pratap Singh (1775-7), grandson Rana Bahadur (1777-99) and great-grandson Girvana Yuddhya (1799-1816). For five years from 1777 he was in charge of the newly conquered Chitwan area, close to the

sensitive border with British India (Regmi 1975: 277-8 & 295). He died in 1787 or early 1788 (1844 V.S.) establishing a military base at Pyuthana in the western hills (Phalendra Rana 1957: 13).

Although the *Bhasavamsavali* does not emphasise Ram Krishna's military role, it does describe in detail his pious gesture in paving at his own expense the road between Pashupatinath and the nearby temple of Guyeswari, and in establishing a *guthi* (land made over in trust for religious purposes) for the feeding of Brahmans and ascetics. The land donated had belonged to a Bhaktapur prince and had been given to Ram Krishna as spoils of war. An inscription set up by descendants of his brother, Jay Krishna, claims that both brothers made the gift jointly.<sup>16</sup> The Rana family historians add the anecdote that Ram Krishna asked permission to undertake the project when Prithvi Narayan asked his followers to name their own rewards after the conquest of the Valley. The king expressed astonishment as he had long had it secretly in mind to pave that road himself, but he nevertheless gave him permission to go ahead (Ramlal 1879: 40; Pudma Rana 1909: 51; Phalendra Rana 1957: 11).

Phalendra Rana links this episode with the origin of the *guru-cela* relationship between an Adhikari Brahman family and the Kunwars. Whilst supervising work on the road, Ram Krishna supposedly observed a Brahman hovering a foot or two above the earth, deep in meditation. He was instructed in a dream by the god Pashupatinath that the dream was none other than the god himself, and that he should make him his *diksa guru*.

Ram Krishna's piety undoubtedly enhanced the stature of the Kunwars in the eyes of their contemporaries, just as it impressed the chronicler, but it did not of itself guarantee political influence. He appears never to have been made a *kaji* ('minister') but to have retained to the end of his life the rank of *sardar*, which he probably obtained during the eastern campaign (D.R. Regmi 1975: I, 244). Phalendra (1957: 13) claims that he was awarded the special status of *mukhya sardar* after the 1773 capture of the Chaudandi capital. In fact, Prithvi Narayan had described him as such in the letter of 1773 quoted above and the words do not denote a new rank but simply the opinion that he was the most valuable of the *sardars*.

There is little evidence on Ram Krishna's political role, but he appears to have been a partisan of Bahadur Shah, a younger son of Prithvi Narayan, who was sent into exile by his brother King Pratap Shah, and then subsequently struggled with Queen Rajendra Laksmi for the regency after Pratap's death and the accession of the infant Rana Bahadur in 1777. A letter which Bahadur Shah sent in November 1777 suggests he expected Ram Krishna would support him (Regmi 1975: I, 288). However, Ram Krishna's involvement was not deep enough to compromise him with the opposing faction. Sympathy for Bahadur Shah was in any case widespread among Prithvi Narayan's older commanders, whereas Pratap Shah, and afterwards his widow, relied more on Newer, non-Gorkha adherents (Shaha 1982: 85-6)<sup>17</sup>.

Whatever Ram Krishna's precise standing in the factional struggles at court, the land grants made to his family in perpetuity would, barring the most extreme political upset, guarantee the Kunwars local influence and a secure if modest livelihood. Prithvi Narayan's letter of September 1772, quoted above, referred to Simbu and Dulikhel, of which the former cannot now be identified. Dhulikhel, on the other hand, is a well-known Newar settlement beyond the eastern rim of the Kathmandu Valley, situated about twenty miles from Kathmandu itself and five miles west of Ram Krishna's new home at Bhamerkot. The modern road to the Tibetan border passes through it, and in the pre-tarmac era it stood at the junction of major trails leading both northwards, and, via the Sun Kosi valley or adjacent ridges, to the eastern territories Ram Krishna played an important part in acquiring for the new, unified Nepal. Whilst he took over the Dhulikhel *khet* lands - that is the low-lying, irrigated fields - he supported the inhabitants in a successful petition to retain their *pakho* (nonirrigated) lands (M.B. Regmi, 1978, 1978b). Thereafter the Kunwars appear to have acted as patrons of the town, interceding when central government threatened to infringe the citizens' remaining land rights.

Ram Krishna's death in 1787/8 was followed a year later by that of his brother, Jay Krishna (Phalendra Rana 1957: 40-1) and the two mens' sons, Ranjit and Chandravir, were left as the senior representatives of the family. Both were to pursue military careers and play their part in the further expansion of the Nepal borders.

In the case of Ranjit, grandfather of Jang Bahadur, the Rana family historians provide a detailed narrative, though, as with Ram Krishna's career, their testimony is unreliable. Ramlal's account is marred not only by predictable exaggeration but also by chronological confusion. Ranjit's first alleged military exploit is the suppression of a rebellion in Jumla, the traditional leader of the *baisi* kingdoms, which occurred shortly after the area had been brought under Gorkha rule. Ramlal (1879: 40-1) dates this to 1772, yet it is known from other sources that the initial conquest of Jumla was not achieved until 1789 (Stiller: 1973: 185). The source of the confusion will be Ramlal's placing Ram Krishna's death sixteen years too early (viz. in 1771 rather than 1787). Assuming Ranjit did actually fight in Jumla, this may have been during the 1789 campaign (in which case the reference to 'rebellion' will be a mistake), or alternatively it is possible he was involved in suppressing the uprising which broke out in Jumla and other parts of western Nepal following the Chinese invasion of 1792 (M.R. Pant 1966: 10, 45-6).

Ranjit is also supposed to have participated in the conquest of Chitwan, the area of which his father was then made governor. This operation took place in 1777 under the direction of Abhiman Singh Basnet, with whom Ram Krishna had earlier campaigned in the east, and of Swarup Singh Kharki (Acharya 1965: 75-6). If Ranjit did in fact take part, then (Ramlal 1879:41;) and (Pudma Rana 1909: 6) must be wrong in stating that he was eighteen years old when his father died, as this



would make him only eight in 1777.<sup>18</sup> Ramlal is in any case mistaken in making him commander of the Gorkha forces on this occasion. There is, however, no reason to doubt the tradition that Ranjit participated in the campaigns of the mid-eighties which overthrew the caubisi kingdoms east of the Gandaki (Ramlal 1879: 41-2), though he must again have been serving in a subordinate capacity.<sup>19</sup>

It is with Nepal's two invasions of Tibet - in 1788 and 1791 - that Ranjit first indubitably emerges as a major military leader. The chronicles list him among the commanders of both expeditions, and, significantly for later developments, he was again closely associated with Abhiman Singh Basnet (D.R. Regmi 1975: I, 432, 439 & 444). Ramlal's portrayal of Ranjit as commander-in-chief for the second invasion is an exaggeration, but not completely removed from the reality.

There is a more serious conflict of sources concerning Ranjit's role during the Chinese invasion of Nepal which Nepali actions in Tibet provoked. A large Chinese army crossed the Himalayas in 1792 and advanced down the Trusuli valley. The course of events is described in detail in a letter sent shortly afterwards by the government in Kathmandu to its officers in the far west.<sup>20</sup> The Nepali forces fought a series of delaying actions on the line of successive left-bank tributaries, and although the Chinese were always able to continue their advance their casualties mounted and negotiations were opened. In the course of these, the Chinese demanded to be allowed to cross the Betravati river and to hold talks at Nuwakot, the town on the ridge south of the river which guarded access to the Kathmandu Valley from the north-west. When permission was denied, they foolishly attempted to force a crossing, and were driven back with heavy losses. Negotiations were resumed and peace agreed on terms which involved the Nepalis giving up their gains in Tibet and agreeing to send a 'tribute' mission to Peking.

Whereas this contemporary account mentions a number of Gorkha commanders and implies that Damodar Pande, son of Prithvi Narayan's old Commander-in-Chief, played the most prominent part, Ramlal makes Ranjit the leader throughout. Ramlal is supported in this by the 'chronology' (i.e. chronicle?) cited in Regmi's account of the war (Ramlal 1879:43-4; D.R. Regmi, 1975: I, 445). However, if Ranjit did in fact have a central role, it is inexplicable why this should have been ignored in King Rana Bahadur's letter. In any case, the details of Ramlal's narrative are wildly distorted. Not only is there the usual exaggeration of number - a Chinese force of 10,000 to 15,000 becomes 70,000 and an engagement in which the Chinese lost around 200 men becomes one with 4,000 casualties on each side<sup>21</sup> - but he describes a final Nepali victory at 'Panchmane' ('Five Chortens') mountain, in which Ranjit used torches fastened to the horns of oxen and lamps hung in trees to trick the enemy into believing they were under mass attack, and then fell upon them from the rear. The basis for this story may be a local legend about a Panchmane ridge within the Kathmandu Valley, but it clearly has no foundation in reality.<sup>22</sup> The final conclusion must be

that Ranjit was serving against the Chinese in a junior position - perhaps an assistant to Abhiman Basnet's nephew Kirtiman - or he was not involved in the campaign at all.<sup>23</sup> His posting to Jumla (see above) might have occurred immediately after his return from the second Tibetan expedition at the end of 1791.

In the years following the Chinese invasion, Gorkha expansion was largely suspended, and political developments in Kathmandu were the main focus of concern. In the wake of Colonel Kirkpatrick's unhappy mission to Kathmandu in 1793, Bahadur Shah, regent since 1785, was relieved of his post and imprisoned by his nephew, King Rana Bahadur, who now took personal charge of the government. There followed the dramatic events of Rana Bahadur's abdication, attempted reassertion of control and withdrawal to Banaras in 1800. The inclusion in the king's party of Ranjit's seventeen year old son, Balnar Singh Kunwar, was to be of crucial importance for the family's fortunes.

There is no direct role on what role, if any, Kunwars had played in the political struggles of the nineties, nor on their position in the network of families at the heart of the Nepali *bharadari*, and in particular what marriage connections they possessed. Ranjit Kunwar, like his father before him, may none the less be assumed to have had little political importance on his own account, and in 1799 held the relatively low rank of *subba*.<sup>24</sup> The reason behind Bal Narsingh's appointment to Rana Bahadur's entourage can therefore only be guessed at, but one hypothesis which readily suggests itself is that, like the young Bhimsen Thapa himself, he owed his position to the patronage of Kaji Kirtiman Singh Basnet.<sup>25</sup> As has already been seen, both Ranjit and Ram Krishna Kunwar had been close military associates of Kirtiman's uncle Abhiman Singh Basnet, and a special relationship between the two families may possibly have developed. A more remote possibility is that the Kunwars' alliance with Bhimsen Thapa's family, rather than commencing from Bal Narsingh and Bhimsen's shared Benares exile, in fact predated it, so that Bhimsen himself recommended the former's inclusion. The Kunwar origins story, as presented both by Wright (1877: 285) and Ramlal (1879: 26), the first ancestor to enter the hills married the daughter of a 'Bhagale Kshetri', and it was to the Bagale Thapa *kul* that Bhimsen's family belonged.<sup>25</sup>

Whether friendship with the Thapas was a long-standing affair or not, it was natural that the Kunwars should share with the latter some of the spoils of victory when Rana Bahadur returned in triumph from Benares in 1804 with Bhimsen Thapa as his principal advisor. Ranjit Kunwar had been a *subba* at the beginning of 1799 when he signed the statement recognising the infant Girvana Yuddha as king, but he was now appointed to the higher rank of *sardar* and attached to the force under Amar Singh Thapa which the new regime despatched to Kumaon<sup>26</sup>. During the next few years many other Kunwars were to take part in the drive westwards, including Ranjit's younger son, Revant, his cousin Chandravir and Chandravir's sons, Bir Bhadra and Bal Bhadra.

It was in Kathmandu, however, that the really dramatic development for the family was to take place. In March 1806, when Rana Bahadur was assassinated by his half-brother Sher Bahadur, Bal Narsingh Kunwar, who had heard his cries for help, struck down the murderer. His own dramatic account of the incident has survived in the form of a petition he later addressed to King Rajendra:

... in the garden a jackal howled. Rana Bahadur said, 'Listen!', and leant on one elbow as he listened out for the cry. At that instant the outcaste (viz. Sher Bahadur) darted forward, let the scabbard of his sword fall to the ground, cried out 'Your mother!', and quickly struck out, just missing Rana Bahadur's arm and hitting him in the chest. Rana Bahadur cried, 'He's killed me.' and on hearing this I ran up. He had moved his arm to reach his own sword, but could not lift the weapon, and the outcaste wielded a second stroke, striking him in the shoulder. As I came up I kept calling on Sher Bahadur to have mercy, but he lunged again. His weapon glanced off a rafter, grazed Rana Bahadur's arm, swept over my cheek and cut my clothing. Then I caught hold of his sword by the hilt, receiving a cut on the hand in the process. I let go of the sword, grabbed him by the throat, and squeezing and pushing got him down on the floor. I plunged my khukri into a vein, he let go of his sword, and then his arm tautened. I grasped his sword and stood up.<sup>27</sup>

The circumstances of this assassination were peculiar. Sher Bahadur's maternal uncle, Kaji Tribhuvan Khawas,<sup>28</sup> had been accused by Rana Bahadur of conspiring with the British against him whilst he was in Benares. The kaji was actually being led to execution when he protested that he could show he had not been alone in responsibility for what had happened. Thereupon an impromptu court, consisting of most of the leading *bharadars* and presided over by Rana Bahadur himself, was convened in Tribhuvan's own home. In the course of proceedings, Rana Bahadur accused Sher Bahadur, hitherto a leading member of the government, of complicity. The latter protested that he had confessed his earlier opposition activities when Rana Bahadur returned to Nepal in 1804, and that he had been granted pardon at that time. He received the reply that the pardon had covered only his offence against Rana Bahadur personally, and that he must answer to those present for his crimes against the state (*dhunga*).<sup>29</sup> Rana Bahadur now rather spoiled his point by referring to the assembled representatives of the state as 'donkeys' and 'slaves', and his half-brother was given permission to go and take tea in the corner of the terrace where the court was sitting. A moment later the jackal gave him his cue.

After Bhimsen Thapa himself arrived on the scene (he had been absent for his evening meal at the critical moment) Sher Bahadur showed signs of revival and Bal Narsingh finished him off with a final sword cut. Rana Bahadur's body was then taken down to the courtyard, where Bal Narsingh found Sher Bahadur's brother-in-law waiting, sword in hand, with a number of followers. He cut him down, and the remainder of the party were put to flight by soldiers on duty. Acting in the name of the six-year old King Girvana Yuddha, Bhimsen moved ruthlessly against the alleged accomplices: among those executed were Kaji Tribhuvan Khawas, Kaji Narsingh Gurung and Vidur Shah (Sher Bahadur's full brother), all of whom had held prominent positions during Rana Bahadur's exile, but had been reconciled with him and facilitated his eventual return. Bhimsen also ensured that Rana Bahadur's senior queen, Rajrajeshwari, who had been exiled to Helambu in 1804, was brought back to the Valley and made to ascend the funeral pyre. This cleared the way for Lalit Tripura Sundari, only recently married to Rana Bahadur, to assume the regency and to remain for many years the formal wielder of an authority held in practice by Bhimsen himself.

By presenting Sher Bahadur's act as part of a wider plot, Bhimsen and his closest associates, including Bal Narsingh, were thus able to strengthen their own position decisively. Whether in fact those who perished in the purge were involved in such a conspiracy must remain an unanswered question. It appears, however, that the political situation before the assassination had been shifting and that different groups might have had good reason to feel apprehensive. For two years after his return to Kathmandu, Rana Bahadur had held no formal position in the administration, and the *cauntaras* and *kajis* had ruled in the name of his infant son. On 26 February 1806, however, just under a month before his death, the ex-king had been appointed *mukhtiyar* ('executive' or 'minister') to his son.<sup>30</sup> Both Sher Bahadur and Narsingh Gurung were among the *bharadars* who attested the *lal mohar* of appointment, but they may have privately felt that the move was an attempt to destroy the balance that had existed up till then between the 'Benares group' and themselves. The presence of Sher Bahadur's brother-in-law in the courtyard on the night of the assassination could thus conceivably be part of a preconcerted arrangement, as claimed by Rana Bahadur's biographer, Chittaranjan Nepali (1963: 78), thought it is also possible that they had only set out for Tribhuvan's house after learning that he was in imminent danger.

The importance of the Sher Bahadur episode for Bal Narsingh's career has perhaps been over-stressed in some accounts by ignoring the fact that he already held the relatively high rank of *sardar* and almost certainly enjoyed Bhimsen Thapa's special confidence.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, his action markedly increased his standing and that of his entire family. Ramlal (1979: 48) and Pudma Rana (1909: 9) write that he was granted an hereditary kajiship and also the right of automatic access to the king. Phalendra Rana (1957: 17) claims that his brothers were made kajis at the same time. The precise details may not be reliable, but there is no reason to doubt Bal Narsingh's own promotion, nor the

fact that members of his family rose with him. Independent evidence confirms that he was indeed in post as a kaji in 1809 and in every year from 1816 to 1837,<sup>32</sup> and the present lack of positive proof for the intervening years is not significant, given the paucity of available material. Bal Narsingh's brother Revant is likewise known to have held similar rank in 1813 and again from 1816 to 1830.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to high public office, Kaji Bal Narsingh was also able to strengthen the link between his own family and Bhimsen's by marrying Ganesh Kumari, daughter of Bhimsen's younger brother, Nain Singh Thapa. The date of the marriage is not known, but it was probably some years after 1806, as their first child, Jang Bahadur, was not born until 1817. This was Bal Narsingh's second marriage, but the name and family of his first wife, who had already borne him one son, Bhaktabir Singh, are also unknown (Acharya 1961: 43).

Bal Narsingh's father, Ranjit, was with the army in Kumaon at the time of Rana Bahadur's assassination. His own promotion from *sardar* to *kaji*, which had taken place by 1809 at the latest (D.R. Regmi 1975: II, 207), may possibly have been a direct consequence of his son's action.

Early in 1806, the Nepali forces crossed the River Satlej and began their long attempt to annex the kingdom of Sansar Chand. Although rapidly successful in the field, they now faced the formidable task of taking his great fortress of Kangra, and a four year siege commenced. Kaji Amar Singh Thapa, in overall command, requested further support from Kathmandu and Bhimsen's brother Nain Singh Thapa was sent at the head of reinforcements. On arrival he tried to persuade the other commanders that they should launch an all-out assault on the walls. When he failed to secure their agreement, he attacked with his own men alone; the operation was unsuccessful and he was himself killed in the course of it (M.R. Pant 1968a:54-5).<sup>34</sup>

Kathmandu now despatched to the front Chauntara Rudrabir Shah and Kaji Dalbhanjan Pande, the latter being a prominent member of the Benares group. The two entered negotiations with Sansar Chand and provisionally accepted a compromise arrangement under which the latter would be allowed to keep his kingdom, but would give his daughter in marriage to King Girvana Yuddha. Because of difficulties he was then having with another hill ruler, Kaji Amar Singh Thapa was initially in favour of the deal, but when his position on the other front improved, he changed his mind and wrote to Kathmandu that outright victory was still possible. The proposed agreement with Sansar Chand was therefore turned down by the Nepal government and Rudrabir and Dalbhanjan were recalled to Kathmandu (M.R. Pant 1968b: 18, 132-3).<sup>35</sup>

In this affair Ranjit Kunwar appears to have opposed Amar Singh Thapa and backed the compromise proposal (Ramlal 1869: 45; Pudma Rana 1909: 8).<sup>36</sup> This was not to be the last example of tension between the two men, for three years later, in September 1810, Ranjit was writing bitterly to Bhimsen Thapa, accusing Amar Singh of denying him and his

son, Revent, the resources to support extra companies which Kathmandu had authorised (D.R. Pant 1971). This split also probably involved Ranjit in ill-feeling with the other main branch of the family, for his cousin Chandravir, also serving in the west with his sons Bal Bhadra and Bir Bhadra, was married to Amar Singh Thapa's daughter, Ambikadevi. (Thapa 1981: genealogical tables). That Chandravir was backing his father-in-law is suggested by the fact that the contemporary Garhwali poet Molaram, who wrote under the patronage of Bir Bhadra Kunwar, alleges in his verse history of Garhwal that Rudrabir and Dalbhanjan were bribed by Sansar Chand to support his request for terms.<sup>37</sup> Further evidence of a split between the two branches of the family can perhaps be seen in Bal Narsingh Kunwar's counter-signature of a royal order of 1811 relieving Chandravir of an appointment as a captain in Garhwal (M.R. Pant 1969: 303-5). The quarrel will have been all the more natural given the rivalry between Amar Singh Thapa and Bal Narsingh's patron, Bhimsen. Against this whole background it is scarcely surprising that Bal Narsingh was to receive an unsympathetic response when, many years later, he sought financial help from cousin Bir Bhadra (Pudma Rana 1909: 18).

The siege of Kangra now continued, and in 1809 Sansar Chand agreed to surrender the fort if he could first be allowed twenty days' truce in which to remove his family and possessions. In fact he used this period of grace to escape to Lahore and solicit the aid of the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh, while in the meantime his officers at Kangra busied themselves with reprovisioning and then renounced the surrender agreement once the twenty days were up. Ranjit Singh moved into the district with his army and in August 1809 he took over the fort himself. A major battle between Sikhs and Gorkhas ensued, and afterwards Amar Singh Thapa finally agreed to withdraw to the east bank of the Satlej.

Ramlal (1879: 46), Pudma Rana (1909: 8-9) and Phalendra Rana (1957: 15) all write that Ranjit Kunwar was killed in the fighting at Kangra, yet there is an extant letter of his written in September 1810, a year after the Gorkha withdrawal, whilst a document of June 1814 refers to him as leader of a force then en route for Pyuthana in central Nepal.<sup>38</sup> The false version of events presented by the Rana family historians was almost certainly originated by Jang Bahadur himself. In an interview with the British Resident in April 1852 he expressed violent hatred for the descendants of Ranjit Singh, 'who, he said, had in a most treacherous manner caused the death of his Paternal and Maternal Grandfather some years ago in the fort at Kangra'<sup>39</sup>. Jang's maternal grandfather, Nain Singh Thapa, had indeed died at Kangra, albeit long before Ranjit Singh became directly involved, but Jang was clearly 'improving' considerably on the truth, presumably to impress on the British that he would always be a reliable ally of theirs should trouble again develop in the recently subdued Panjab. If, as is possible, grandfather Ranjit Kunwar had in fact died in the Anglo-Gorkha war of 1814-16, Jang could have had the additional motive of concealing his family's role as opponents rather than allies of the British.

Chandravir Kunwar may have died before the outbreak of war in 1814 (Gyewali 1961: 3), but his sons, and also Bal Narsingh's brother Revant, were still with the Nepali forces in the west. The decision to fight rather than concede British territorial demands had been strenuously opposed by Kaji Amar Singh Thapa and his senior colleagues, and it is most likely that Chandravir's sons backed their grandfather in this controversy and that Bal Narsingh supported Bhimsen's advocacy of war. Once the fighting began, however, Chandravir's son Bal Bhadra found himself at the centre of the stage. He was commander in the Dehra Dun district, and when the British invaded at the outset of hostilities, he withdrew inside the small hill fort of Kalanga or Nalpani. He held off a vastly superior enemy force for a month, finally escaping through British lines with the seventy surviving members of the garrison. He had been enabled to hold out for as long as he did principally because of the military ineptitude of his opponents, but the appalling conditions which the Nepalis had endured within the fort and the chivalrous spirit in which hostilities had been conducted greatly impressed the British. Bhadra survived the war, but in 1824 died in battle in Afghanistan, and his former opponents then erected a monument at Kalunga, 'as a tribute of respect for our gallant adversary, Bulbudder, commander of the fort, and his brave Gurkhas, who were afterwards, while in the service of Ranjit Singh, shot down in their ranks to the last man by Afghan artillery' (Gyewali 1961: 3; Atkinson 1882: II, Part 2, 640). Although Jang Bahadur in 1851 sanctioned a land grant for the maintenance of Bal Bhadra's son's widow (Gyewali 1961: 15), he never mentioned his relative in conversations with British acquaintances, and the British therefore long continued to believe that their opponent had been a Thapa rather than a Kunwar. As with his fabrication concerning Ranjit Kunwar's death, Jang was perhaps loath to speak of days when Nepal and Britain had been enemies, but the real reason for his silence may well have rather been the lack of warmth between the two branches of the family.

Jang's own father and grandfather played a much less prestigious role in the conflict than did Bal Bhadra. As has been seen already, Ranjit Kunwar was sent with troops to Pyuthana a few months before the outbreak of war, but nothing is known of his subsequent history and he probably died shortly afterwards. Although Ramlal (1879: 48) and Phalendra Rana (1957: 18) claim that Bal Narsingh had seen military service with his father during the Kangra campaign and had been wounded in the fighting, he had probably spent most of his time at court in Kathmandu until he was sent in 1814 with the Sri Mehar regiment to Vijaypur in the eastern Tarai (Phalendra, *loc. cit.*). The silence of Ramlal and Pudma concerning this appointment would suggest that he was never involved in any serious fighting during the war.

During the post-war years, Bal Narsingh and his brother Revant retained their position as kajis, whilst a third brother, Balram, who was perhaps considerably younger than the other two, is known to have been a kaji in 1826 and 1827 and a captain thereafter until 1837. Their cousin Bir Bhadra, also served in the latter rank, whilst his brother Bal Bhadra, as has already been seen, entered the service of Ranjit Singh in the Panjab.<sup>40</sup>

Bal Narsingh's alliance with Bhimsen's family was further cemented when his second wife, Bhimsen's niece, gave birth on 18 June 1817 to their first child, Jang Bahadur. Jang's six full brothers were born over the next eleven years (Acharya 1961: 43), to be followed by two daughters (Ramlal 1879: 52).

Up until his dismissal from office in a purge of Bhimsen's supporters early in 1837, Bal Narsingh held a succession of provincial governorships. He was possibly at Dhankuta from 1816 to 1820 (Acharya 1961: 43), and certainly there from 1828 to the winter of 1832/3 when he was transferred to Dandeldhura in the far west. In 1835 he was again transferred, this time to Jumla (Pudma Rana 1909: 16-17). These responsibilities did not prevent him from also spending periods of time in Kathmandu. He was, for example, among an official delegation which visited the British Residency for discussions with Brian Hodgson in June 1833.<sup>41</sup> Jang Bahadur was born in Kathmandu, at the Maruhiti *tol*, the family having probably established their main home here rather than at Ram Krishna Kunwar's old base at Bhamerkot beyond the eastern rim of the Kathmandu valley.<sup>42</sup> After the birth quarrels between Bal Narsingh's first wife and Jang's mother led him to move to a new home at Thapathali, leaving the first wife and her son, Bhaktabir, behind at Maruhiti (Acharya 1961: 43).

Although Bal Narsingh's time will have been mainly divided between the capital and his provincial commands, it is clear that he had a continuing involvement with Dhulikhel which was not restricted to the mere receiving of revenue. In 1833 he endowed a religious festival in the town, the Srikrishna Jatra, whilst in 1837 he intervened successfully when there was a threat to confiscate the inhabitants' remaining *birta* lands (i.e. the *pakho* (non-irrigated) land as against irrigated fields which the Kunwars themselves had taken over under Prithvi Narayan Shah).<sup>43</sup> A royal order of 1874 refers to the annual celebration in the town of a 'Balnarsingh Jatra', which may perhaps be identified as the original Srikrishna Jatra, renamed after its founder.<sup>44</sup> The relationship with the family is remembered today in Dhulikhel, itself, albeit in distorted fashion, in the form of the local belief that the town was the *maiti* (woman's paternal home) of Jang Bahadur's mother and that Jang's own glorious future was presaged when he was discovered asleep in nearby fields with a king cobra standing guard over him.<sup>45</sup> Although Ganesh Kumari's father, Nain Singh Thapa, must have had his main home at Kathmandu or in Gorkha district, the tradition does suggest that Jang, and presumably other members of his family, spent time in the area. This supposition is perhaps supported by the fact that Hemdal Thapa, who was later to become father-in-law to Jang's eldest daughter and a close political associate and who does not seem to have been related to Bhimsen came from Nava Buddha, situated a little to the south of Dhulikhel:<sup>46</sup> the two men were conceivably first brought together as children by the common Dhulikhel connection.

Bal Narsingh's loss of office in 1837, shortly before Bhimsen's dismissal and imprisonment, was a heavy blow in terms both of prestige



and of income. Pudma Rana (1909: 18) perhaps paints too stark a picture of ensuing poverty (there was still *birta* income to be relied upon) but there is no reason to doubt his story of Bal Narsingh needing to ask his cousin Bir Bhadra for a loan to complete a building project and failing to get it. Nonetheless, the family remained active in the campaign to secure Bhimsen's release, which was achieved at the end of the year: it was alleged two years later that Balram Kunwar, Bal Narsingh's younger brother, had bribed the king's father-in-law to speed the process.<sup>47</sup> Following the release, or possibly when news arrived of Mathbar Singh Thapa's evasion of the British to reach the Panjab, Bal Narsingh himself regained office.<sup>48</sup>

Tracing the course of subsequent political alignments as tensions in the Darbar mounted still further and relations with British India worsened, is a difficult task, but an important factor in determining Bal Narsingh's conduct was probably the marriage of Jang Bahadur in the spring of 1839 to a daughter of Prasad Singh Basnet.<sup>49</sup> A prominent figure during Bhimsen's last years, Prasad Singh was the great-nephew of Abhiman Singh Basnet, with whom both Ram Krishna Kunwar and Ranjit Kunwar had campaigned in earlier days, and the marriage can be seen as the renewing of an old alliance. Bal Narsingh was among the victims of the 'Kala' Pande financial exactions 1839, but after Bhimsen's death in prison that summer he was less enthusiastic than many other *bharadars* over the prospect of allying with the British Resident, Brian Hodgson, to oust the Pandes. His own position as a debtor of one of the Indian subjects whom Hodgson was championing, and also the stance of his brother-in-law Mathbar Singh Thapa, then endeavouring to play both pro- and anti-British cards simultaneously, will have been part of the explanation. However, the major factor was probably the link with Prasad Singh Basnet, who was alternatively aligning himself closely with the Pandes and drawing away from them. The influence was not entirely one way, for it is likely that Bal Narsingh's position helped moderate the strength of Prasad Singh's commitment to the Pandes. Nonetheless, Bal Narsingh's own stance was sufficiently ambiguous to earn him a place in the 'indifferent' category of the 'List of Good, Bad and Indifferent Chiefs' which Hodgson drew up in autumn 1840 and in which Prasad Singh was listed as 'bad'.<sup>50</sup> In contrast, the head of the other main branch of the family, Bir Bhadra Kunwar, was unambiguously classed as a 'good chief': in his consistently pro-British attitude he was probably following the line taken by his uncles, the sons of Amar Singh Thapa.

The alliance between Bal Narsingh and Prasad Singh Basnet continued under the 'British Ministry' led by the Paudyal *gurus*. The appointment of Jang Bahadur as a *kaji* in the autumn of 1842, together with the securing of control of the *sadar daphtar khana* (Central Lands Assignment Office) by Prasad Singh's brother, Kulman Singh, which probably occurred at about the same time, indicated a slight shift in the balance of power within the *bharadari* in favour of this Kunwar-Basnet alliance.<sup>51</sup> Bal Narsingh's death occurred shortly afterwards, probably in December 1842.<sup>52</sup> Pudma Rana (1909: 32) writes of this event leaving the young

Jang Bahadur alone to face the coming political storm, but in reality his position was buttressed by a family connection which dated from his great-grandfather's time and which his own marriage had renewed.

## Conclusion

The Kunwars wish to have themselves accepted as the descendants of Rajputs reflected the higher value placed in Nepali society on real or supposed Indian, as opposed to indigenous origins. The tendency is an ancient one in the Himalayas, the earliest documented example being the claim of rulers in the Nepal valley in the first millenium A.D. to descent from the Licchavis of Vaisali (M.R. Regmi 1976). The Shah dynasty's own claim to Rajput status is documented from the reign of Rama Shah in the 17th century (Acharya 1967: I, 30), but such genealogies had probably been suggested long before both for them and for other *baisi* and *caubisi* ruling houses. Like the Thakuris, Nepal's Brahmans claimed India as their original home, both Kumaoni and Purbiya groups allegedly having come from Kanyakubja on the Ganges. Such assertions among the elite found ready imitation amongst other groups in the population: the Magar Ranas' supposed Chittaurgarh connection has already been referred to, whilst one of the origin legends of the Gurung *car jat* claims that they were Rajputs from the south who had lost their caste status (Pignède 1966: 164-70).

The felt necessity for making such claims was partly a consequence of historical instances of settlers from the south establishing ascendancy over the indigenous population. However, more important than whether the physical origins of a particular elite group was or was not in the plains was the fact that the values in terms of which they justified their hegemony were of Indian origin. The acceptance of Hindu social values, and in particular of the caste system meant the acceptance of the plains as the central reference point, in relation to which the hills were culturally as well as geographically peripheral. To assert one's ultimate Indian origin was thus to assert one's own centrality in the dominant cultural tradition. Not only in Nepal but in South Asia generally, local societies were assimilated to an overarching Hindu structure not just by the physical immigration of Brahmins and Kshatriyas from elsewhere, but also by existing tribal leaders and priests redefining themselves in terms of these Hindu categories and then adopting a suitable origin legend to buttress their new status.

The process should not, however, be seen as a purely Hindu phenomenon. In Europe, too, claims to foreign origin have been put forward by those seeking to associate themselves more closely with a dominant cultural tradition to which their own region was felt to be peripheral. Thus the progressive Hellenisation of Roman culture was reflected in the adoption of the legend of the foundation of the city by the Trojan Aeneas, which found its fullest expression in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Similarly, the so-called Bruts of medieval Britain, most famous of which is the work of the 12th century writer Geoffrey of Monmouth, traced the

descent of the island's rulers from another supposed refugee from Troy, Brutus. Examples of the same phenomenon could no doubt be found in many other cultures.

The preference thus seemingly revealed for the foreign over the indigenous is nonetheless only part of the story. In Nepal, as elsewhere, the contrary tendency to value one's own locality over that which comes from outside is also important. The two principles are both embodied in the *Muluki Ain* of 1845, where Brahman and Thakuri, with their supposed ultimate Indian origin, take precedence over the remainder of the population, yet within the Brahman category those long-established in the hills are regarded as superior to more recent immigrants from the plains (Höfer 1979: 151-2). The opposing principles are seen fused in Prithvi Narayan's famous assertion in the *Divya Upades* that it is now Nepal which is the *asal* (real) *hindustan*, India itself having succumbed to *mleccha* domination (Pokhrel 1986: 159).

In the case of the Kunwars the second tendency, valuing the local over the distant, is seen not so much in the family's official propaganda as in legends concerning Jang Bahadur preserved in the folk tradition. One such example has been presented above in the Dhulikhel story of Jang and the *nagraja*, which clearly sees him as a local boy made good, rather than the *rajkumar kumaratmaj* ('prince and son of princes') as he styled himself after his Rajput status had been officially recognised. The belief that Jang Bahadur became maharaja 'from an ordinary soldier' (Clark 1977: 260) is another reflection of a popular tradition that makes his origins less, rather than more grand than they actually were.

In addition to a preference for the near and familiar, the folk tradition also presents an emphasis on Jang as an individual, rising through his own merits, rather than as a member of an illustrious family. However, in a traditional society, with position primarily dependent on ascriptive status, strong emphasis on the family as a collective unit must be the normal rule. A striking example of this attitude was found at the heart of the Nepali political order in that, in addition to the normal principle of hereditary succession to the throne, it was felt that even during a particular sovereign's reign, loyalty was owed to the dynasty as a whole rather than to that one individual (Kirkpatrick 1811: 24). Hereditary right was also important in determining the relative importance of families within the *bharadari*, as seen in the institution of the *tharghars* and in Prithvi Narayan's injunction to leave control of relations with India in the hands of the descendants of Shivaram Basnet, and of Tibet with those of Kalu Pande (Pokhrel 1986: 159). The point was not that such rights were never violated - in fact they frequently were - but whenever this happened strong resentment would be generated: the hostility of many *bharadars* towards Bhimsen, for example, was not just the inevitable jealousy of the man at the top of the tree, but also generated by indignation that a man whose family had not been conspicuous in Prithvi Narayan's day should now have become preeminent. Against this background, it was

particularly important for the Kunwars, or any other *bharadar* family, to build up the role that they had played in the service of the Shah dynasty, both at Gorkha and in unified Nepal. The distortions which have been analysed above in the accounts of the 'Rana family historians' were an inevitable result.

## NOTES

1. The most famous of these claims, that of the Shah dynasty itself, has been carefully analysed by Leelanteswar Baral (1964) and shown to be almost certainly false. There is no reason to doubt that some migration took place from plains to hills under Muslim pressure, and that this was a factor in the progressive Hinduisation of the Khas tribesmen and Tucci (1956: 130) may conceivably be correct in supposing that the arrival of Rajput refugees triggered the 14th century collapse of the 'Malla Empire' in western Nepal. However, there is evidence that Thakuri families were established in the hills well before this time, and, if they are not of straightforward Khas extraction, the Thakuris are probably to be seen as the descendants of Gurjaras or other peoples who entered the sub-continent from the north-west (P.R. Sharma 1972).
2. Brian Hodgson's 'Recollections', English Historical MSS. c.262 (Bodleian Library), p. 210.
3. The fullest account of the sect in Nepal is that of Unbescheid (1980).
4. Baral (1964: 111) assumes that 'Khadka' has the same reference both when used of the Kunwars and of the early Gorkha king, and he seems unaware that it is a *thar* as well as a *kul* name.
5. Hodgson Papers (India Office Library), Vol. 58, ff. 37-8, cited by Baral (1964: 121).
6. The move to Kaski is mentioned by Wright (1877: 286), Ramlal (1879: 28), and Phalendra Rana (1957: 3). According to the first two it was made by Ahiiram, but Phalendra claims the first settler was Ahiiram's father, Ratnajit. The latter's version is consistent with (and perhaps deliberately designed to incorporate) his naming two brothers of Ratnajit, Kunwar Dhanjit and Kunwar Manjit, and claiming the former as the ancestor of the present-day Kunwars of Kaski and Lamjung.
7. This simplified form of marriage is now often employed in case of elopement or to avoid the expense of the full rites (Furer-Haimendorf 1966: 49-50).
8. Wright (1877: 287) and Ramlal (1879: 30) both make Ahiiram himself the grantee, whereas Phalendra Rana (1957: 7) claims the grant was made to a younger brother, Manajit, and that the latter is the

ancestor of the Gorkha Kunwars. This may be based on genuine oral tradition unavailable to the earlier two writers, but the recurrence of the name 'Manajit' in two successive generations is suspicious, (See Note 6). No uncle or brother of Ahiram is mentioned in any other source, and possibly the two Manajits and Dhanajit were invented after Jang came to power by other Kunwars who wanted to prove a connection with his family.

9. Copper-plate inscription recognising Girvana Yuddha as king, Phalgun 2 Sudi 1855 (8 March 1799), published in Nepali (1963: 121 ff.)
10. The date follows from Ram Krishna's being 59 when he died (Wright 1877: 287; Ramlal 1879: 40) and from Phalendra Rana's statement (1957: 13) that this was in 1844 V.S. (1787/8). Ramlal places the death in 1771 and the arrival in Gorkha in 1724, but this is clearly wrong, since a letter received by Ram Krishna in September 1783 is still extant (Acharya 1965: 88).
11. The close resemblance was first pointed out by Marize (1980: 64). It is most probably the result of both men depending on the same Nepali source, presumably the document mentioned by Pudma (1909: 1) as being in his possession at Allahabad.
12. *Lal mohar* of 3 Chaitra Badi 1860 (29 March 1804) appointing Ranjit Kunwara quoted by Acharya (1967: II, 384).
13. Phalendra adds that a lamp is still lit every evening in his memory at Pashupatinath, paid for out of a donation made by his brothers. Nay Raj Pant and his colleagues (1968: 192-3) state that it was the middle brother who died, but this is refuted by a document published in their own volume (913) naming Jay Krishna as partner of Ram Krishna in a religious donation made after the conquest of the Valley (see below, Note 16).
14. The year is missing from the original document and supplied by the editor.
15. Prithvi Narayan Shah to Ram Krishna Kunwar, 9 Phalgun Badi (?) 1829 (15 Feb. 1773), published in Pokhrel (1986: 150-1). The year is supplied by the editor: D.R. Regmi (1975: I, 244) dates the document to 1774.
16. Published by Naya Raj Pant et al. (1968: 912-3). The text was made available by Jay Krishna's great-great-grandson. It is not made clear in which generation the inscription was set up, but the reference to Ram Krishna and Jay Krishna as *briddhaprapitamaha* (literally 'great-great-grandfathers') suggests it is relatively recent. The document's date for the donation itself is equivalent to 1773/4, whereas the *Bhasavamsavali* places it in 1770/1.

17. See Baburam Acharya (1965: 70-1) for the 'non-Gorkhali clique' which influenced Pratap Singh.
18. Ramlal places this campaign in 1775. Eighteen years might be correct for Ranjit's age in 1771, the year that Ramlal *supposed* his father died (see Note 10).
19. The reduction of the *caubisi* states was completed with the final conquest of Kaski in 1786/7 (M.R. Pant 1969:326). Ramlal's date of 1781 is a simple error, unless referring to a limited Nepali success earlier on.
20. Rana Bahadur to Kaji Jagat Pande and Captain Galaiya Khawas, Sunday 7 Kartik Badi 1849 (7 October 1792), published in *Itihas Prakas*, 1 (1955), pp. 3-4 and in Naraharinath (1966: 17-20.) See also Stiller's account (1973: 206-12).
21. The true size of the invasion force is known from the Chinese historian, Wei Yuan, translated in Landon (1928: II, 275-81). Ramlal describes the battle as taking place at Daibung, which was the Nepalis' base immediately before and after the last battle north of the Betrawati and also the position from which the Chinese launched their abortive attack across the river. Rana Bahadur's contemporary letter (see previous note) puts Chinese casualties at between 150 and 250 in the first of these engagements, which is almost certainly the one referred to by Ramlal and Pudma Rana. Although the Nepalis were technically victors in this battle, they subsequently withdrew south of the Betrawati to facilitate negotiations. Stiller (1973: 208) less plausibly assumes the reference is to an earlier clash near Dhunche, the Nepali base before they fell back to Daibung; in any case, the actual casualties here, too, were very light, Rana Bahadur putting them at 40-50 on the Nepali side and 200-250 for the Chinese.
22. D.R. Regmi (1975: I, 471) records a popular belief that the Chinese army reached the top of the ridge and then fled when they saw a large number of armed men and women coming towards them. He suggests that a small Chinese delegation may have met regent Bahadur Shah there. The five chortens (*mane*) from which the ridge gets its name were supposedly erected by the Chinese.
23. Kirtiman Singh Basnet is mentioned in Rana Bahadur's letter as one of the commanders at the repulse of the Chinese on the Betrawati, and in view of the probable association of the Kunwars with the Basnets, Ranjit might well have been in his detachment. Had Ranjit played a more prominent role, this would most likely have been mentioned both by Phalendra Rana and by Perceval Landon: the historical material presented by the latter largely derived from *mahila gurujyu* Hemraj Pande, a prominent court figure in the final years of Rana rule (Dinesh Raj Pande, personal communication), and he, like Phalendra, would certainly not have passed over Ranjit's exploits, had they possessed any plausibility.

24. List of *bharadars* subscribing to the *tamapatra* of Wednesday 15 Magh Sudi 1855 (20 February 1799) recognising Girvana Yuddha as king, published in Nepali (1963: 121). Subbas usually served as district administrators, and were normally subordinate to the sardars placed in military control of newly conquered areas. Ranjit was himself a sardar during the Tibetan campaign (see 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal* (24 July 1973, p.2) but seems then to have remained in the lower rank, or out of employment, until his appointment as a kaji in 1804 (see below, Note 26).
25. The spelling 'Bhagale' is found both in Wright (1877: 285) and Ramlal (1879: 26). Ramlal equates 'Bhagale' with the Indian caste name 'Baghel', the former presumably being an intermediate form between the latter and the *kul* name 'Bagale'. The derivation is, however, questioned by Jagdish Regmi (1978: 46).
26. The *lal mohar* of appointment, issued on 29 March 1804, about three weeks after Rana Bahadur's return, is quoted in Acharya (1967: II, 386). The *Bhasavamsavali*, quoted in M.R. Pant (1967: 150) records his posting to the west.
27. Undated *arji* (petition) of Kaji Bal Narsingh Kunwar, published Nepali (1963: 144-7). A condensed paraphrase is given in D.R. Regmi (1975: II, 164-7); the 'Khardar Bal Bhadra mentioned in the document should probably be identified with the 'Khardar Bal Bhadra Pandit' of the *lal mohar* of 13 Jyestha Badi 1861 (7 May or 6 June 1804, depending on whether the intercalary Chaitra had been included in Nepal) published in Nepali (1963: 139-41), rather than, as assumed by Regmi, with Bal Narsingh's cousin Bal Bhadra Kunwar. The *arji* is the source for the remainder of the account of the assassination in the text.
28. Tribhuvan was the son of a leading noble of the Newar kingdom of Patan, who had gone over to Prithvi Narayan during the unification struggle. Tribhuvan's sister is thought to have become a concubine of King Pratap D Singh and the mother of both Sher Bahadur and Vidur Shah (D.R. Regmi 1975: I, 171), and this is presumably the point behind the reference to Rana Bahadur's mother (legitimately married, but a Brahman widow) made by Sher Bahadur during the assassination.
29. The Nepali *dhunga* (literally, 'stone') is first found used in this sense in Prithvi Narayan's time (M.C. Regmi 1978: 171-4).
30. *Lal mohar* of appointment, dated Wednesday 8 Phagun Sudi 1862 (26 February 1806), published in Nepali (1963: 74). According to Acharya (1965: 119 & 123) prior to this date Bhimsen and Sher Bahadur had been *de facto* heads of government, whilst Ranjit Pande and Ranadhoj Shah had been nominally appointed chief kaji and chief chauntara respectively.

31. He is listed as a sardar in the *lal mohar* of 6 June 1804 cited in n. 27).
32. Mahila Guru's letter of 8 October 1809 to Kajis Bhimsen Thapa, Ranadhoj Thapa, Bal Narsingh Kunwar and Ranajit Kunwar, cited by D.R. Regmi (1975: II, 207). See also the table of Kunwar office-holders in Stiller (1976: Appendix A).
33. Letter of Kaji Amar Singh Thapa to General Amar Singh Thapa, dated Tuesday 1 Marg Sudi 1870 (23 November 1813), published in *Purnima*, No. 10, Magh-Phagun 2018 (Jan-March 1962), p/43; Stiller (1976: Appendix A).
34. This must have occurred in winter 1806/7, since the letter from Kathmandu placing Bhakti Thapa under the joint authority of Kajis Amar Singh Thapa and Nain Singh is dated Saturday 13 Kartik Badi 1863 (8 November 1806), whilst the *Bhasavamsavali* states that Nain Singh died in 1728 *saka* (1806/7). Stiller (1973: 235) places the episode in 1808, but this must be an accidental slip, as he cites M.R. Pant, who quotes both documents.
35. This abortive agreement is confused with the one actually concluded in 1809 by D.R. Regmi (1975: II, 203) and also seemingly by Stiller (1973: 235-8). Pant's account of the earlier negotiation is fully supported by his quotations from the *Bhasavamsavali* and the *Gadhrjavamsavali*.
36. Both Ramlal and Pudma Rana describe the rejected proposals in terms very similar to those of the *Bhasavamsavali*, but they ignore the role of Dalbhanjan and Rudrabir and present the quarrel as one between Ranjit Kunwar, whom Pudma wrongly describes as commander-in-chief, and Amar Singh Thapa alone. They also perhaps confuse the Amar Singh Thapa who commanded in the west with Bhimsen Thapa's father of the same name.
37. Molaram, *Gadhrjavamsa*, quoted in M.R. Pant (1968b: No. 18, 137). The poet's connection with Bir Bhadra is shown by verses in his *Girvana Yuddha Prakasa* (*ib.*: 139-41).
38. Ranjit Kunwar to Bhimsen Thapa, dated Sunday 11 Badra Sudi 1867 (9 September 1810), published in D.R. Pant (1971); Bhimsen Thapa and Ranadhoj Thapa to Bhaktawar Singh Basnet, 18 Jeth 1871 (29 May 1814) in M.R. Pant (1964).
39. George Ramsey to Lord Dalhousie, 14 April 1842, Dalhousie Muniments (Scottish Record Office), GD 45/6/154.
40. See the Kunwar office-holders table in Stiller (1976: Appendix A). The list of Nepalese *bharadars* forwarded to Calcutta on 6 June 1816 by Acting Resident Lt. Boileau (Nepal Residency Records,



India Office Records) NR/5/35) lists Revant as a captain, however, and unless this is simply an error, he was presumably temporarily demoted during the war but had regained his former rank by the end of 1816.

41. Hodgsony to Government, 13 June 1833, NR/5/44.
42. Although Acharya (1961:43) suggests that the birth might have occurred at Dhankuta, Jang's son in a speech inaugurating his father's statue in 1885 specifically says it was at Kathmandu, (Gimlette 1928: 180-1) and Maruhiti is mentioned in a manuscript account of Jang's early life in the collection of Mohan R Prasad Khanal (Sri 3 *Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana*, Part 1, p. 13).
43. See the documents translated in *Regmi Research Series*, 10, 1 (Jan 1978), pp. 8-9.
44. Order of King Surendra to the Newar Cultivators of Dulikhel, dated 8 Paush Badi 1991(31 December 1874), published in His Majesty's Government, Communications Ministry (1975: I, 500). The editors prefer to equate the Bal Narsingh Jatra with the modern Bhagwati Jatra.
45. Interview with Khoju Shrestha, Dhulikhel, October 1983. Other versions of the story place it elsewhere. Rishikesh Shaha (1983: 8) associates it with Jang's alleged soujourn among the Tharus of the Tarai in the late 'thirties.
46. *Lal mohar* appointing Hemdal Thapa a kaji, dated Saturday 3 Marg Sudi 1903 (21 November 1846), published in *Adhikari* (1984: 138). A list of *bharadars* compiled in 1843 and included among the Hodgson Papers in the India Office Library (Vol. 52, ff. 169-71) shows him separately from the well-known Thapa families of Bhimsen and Kaji Amar Singh Thapa.
47. 'Nepaul Summary', (John Hopkins Collection, Cleveland Library, Ohio) January 1839; Hodgson to Maddock, 1 March 1839, NR.5/49; Hodgson to Government, 25 February 1839, FS 18 December 1839, No. 91.
48. Bal Narsingh is among the countersignatories of an official document of 10 Baisakh 1895 (4 May 1838), published in *Itihas Prakas* 2,2 (2013 V.S. (1956/7)), p. 166, and is shown as a kaji in 1838 in Stiller (1963: Appendix A).
49. Acharya (1961) places the marriage to the Basnet girl at this point, and that to Nanda Kumari Ksatri in 1841. Pudma Rana's dating of the latter marriage to January 1839 (1909: 20) appears to be a mistake, since in a list of Jang's wives which he himself drew up in the 1870's and which is published in Dixit (1983: 139-47) the first and second wives, though unnamed, can be

plausibly identified with Prasad Singh's daughter and with Nanda Kumari respectively: both women are described as 'Jeetha Maharani', and the date of death of the first is given as 1847, the same year in which oral tradition claims the Basnet wife died (information from Puruswattam Shamsher J.B. Rana), while the date of 1850 for the second wife's death is consistent with the birth of her first son Jagat in 1848 (N.R. Pant 1974: 14). Pudma's list omits entirely mention of Jang's pre-1839 marriage(s).

50. English Historical MSS (Bodleian Library) c.262, p.22. The inclusion of Prasad Singh Basnet in the anti-British grouping suggests the list was drawn up in late October or November, since earlier Prasad had swung behind the anti-Pande majority in the *bharadari*. For fuller treatment of factional politics at this time, see Whelpton (1987).
51. Jang's appointment as a kaji is reported in Wheeler (1878: 9 November 1842 entry). Kulman Singh is shown in charge of the *Sadar Daphtar Khana* in a list of *bharadars* compiled early in 1843.
52. Bal Narsingh's death is dated by Pudma Rana (1909: 32) to 24 December 1841, but this must be an error for December 1842, the date given by Baburam. Pudma's chronology in this section of his work seems to be consistently a year out: he places the famous incident of Jang Bahadur's leap into the well in 1841 (ib.: 31), but this is known from the Resident's Diary to have occurred on 27 April 1842 (Wheeler: 1878).

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190 CNAS Journal, Vol. 14, No. 3 (August 1987)

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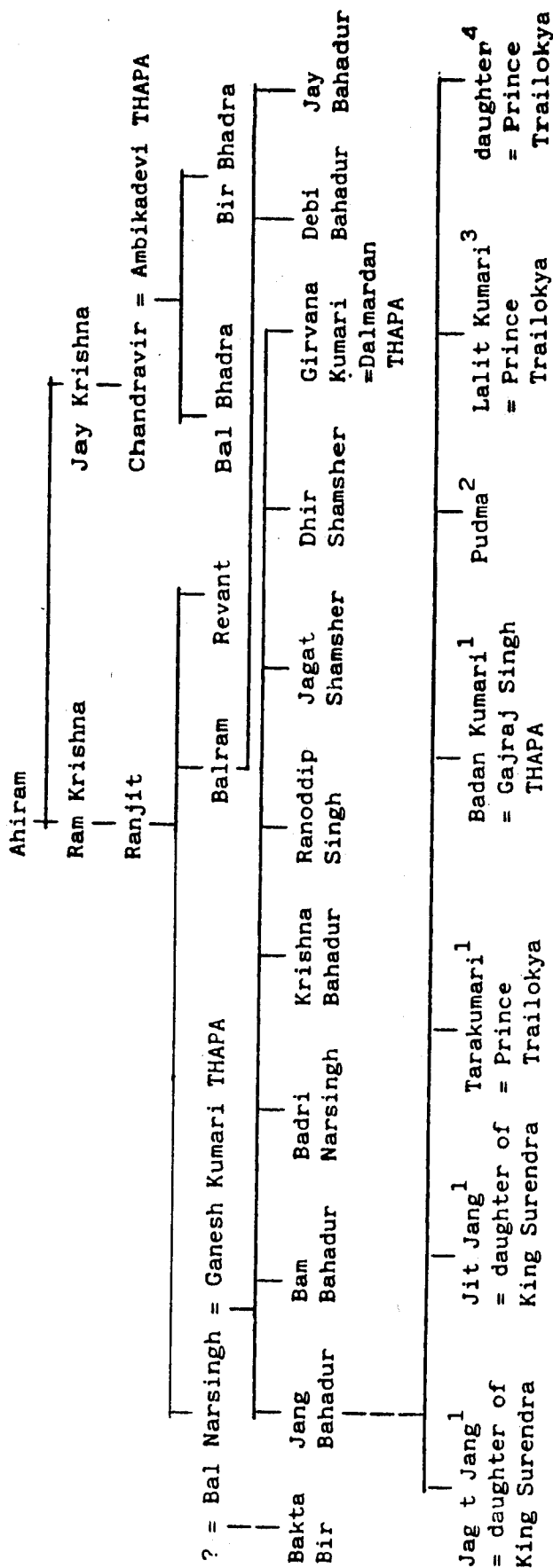
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1 Children by Nanda Kumari Devi, sister of Sanak Singh Sripali Tandon, married in 1841<sup>3</sup>

2 Son by a daughter of Ranasher SHAH.

3 Mojumdar, 'Indo-Nepalese Relations', op.cit., p.370. Lalit Kumari may have been the child of Siddhi Gajendra Laksmi BASNET, whom Jang abducted after coming to power. Siddhi is mistakenly described as Tara-kumari's mother by Kashinath Diksit (Bhaeka Kura, Kathmandu: Narendramani Diksit, 2031 VS (1974/5), p.13). Jang had already married another daughter of Prasad Singh BASNET in 1839.

4 Daughter of Hiranya Garbha Kumari SHAH.

## *Field Studies of Energy Expenditure - Logistics and Contributions*

C. Panter-Brick

### Introduction

The subject of this paper is the measurement of energy expenditure and energy balance under field conditions. The objectives of such work are to describe the health status of a community, to understand the regulation of energy balance, and to answer questions on human variation and adaptation in an ecological context. In part 1, I explain some of the steps taken in the choice and implementation of a protocol, and in part 2, I discuss the aims and validity of such field research. My talk draws largely upon one year's field experience in 1982-83 in the middle hills of central Nepal (village of Salme, district of Nuwakot). It was a study on the energetics of two population groups, the Tamang/Ghale, subsistence agriculturalists and herders, of Tibeto-Burmese origin, and the Kami, a blacksmith caste of Indo-Nepalese descent; more particularly, it focused on women, especially pregnant and lactating mothers. The project was integrated in the team research of the French National Centre of Scientific Research (G.R.E.C.O., Himalaya-Karakorum), which investigated in a multidisciplinary framework the relationships between man and his environment on this large Himalayan watershed.

### I

#### CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

##### Measuring energy expenditure

Excellent reviews of the technical and analytical aspects of the measurement of energy expenditure are available in the literature (Durnin and Brockway, 1959; Durnin and Passmore, 1967; Durnin, 1978; Nelms, 1982). Only some practical steps taken in the field are described here. The procedure for measuring energy expenditure is not overly complicated, and consists in analysing samples of expired air during the exercise of a given activity. The subject is asked to perform the work wearing a noseclip and breathing through a mouthpiece which enables the collection of all expired air in a sample bag. The work is timed representatively and the total volume of respiration measured. The sample air is then analysed for its gas content, principally oxygen. From De Weir's formula (1949), which expresses a relationship between recorded volume, sample time and percentage of oxygen concentration, the oxygen uptake ( $\text{VO}_2$ ) is readily calculated in Kilojoule or Kilocalorie per minute. The value, corrected for body weight and body fat, is an estimate of the energy cost of the particular activity sampled.

A number of instruments designed for gas sampling may be taken to the field. The most recently developed are the Oxylog (Humphrey and Wolf) and the Miser (Eley et al). For my field purposes in Nepal, I chose the Kofranyi & Michaelis (Max Planck) respirometer, most widely used and of proven robustness in the longterm and isolated field conditions. It is a compact box, carried on the back (or front) of the subject, which meters the volume of expired air and samples it for subsequent analysis. A full bladder or plastic bag can be filled in an experiment lasting about 20-30 minutes. I also took a Douglas bag, which collects all the expired air and therefore cuts down the time of measurement to 3-10 minutes; this makes it more expedient to measure the cost of resting metabolism and the effort of a step test. Next, for the purposes of gas analysis, I bought a portable battery-operated (Servomex) Oxygen Analyser, adjusted to local altitudinal pressures, and remarkable in convenience and precision. It needed however to be calibrated in the field with nitrogen (of 99.9% purity), shipped from British Oxygen Company, London. To calibrate the respirometers, I chose a three liter steel syringe (Cranlea Medical Electronics) to operate manually, since the dry-flow gas meter suggested by Durnin and Brockway (1959) is heavy and runs on electricity. Finally I included a heart-rate pulsemeter to monitor work effort; the relationship between heart rate and metabolic cost is not fully satisfactory (Bradfield 1971; Verma et al, 1979), but is useful information in the step test. In short, necessary equipment, even kept to essentials, is quite cumbersome; mine was sent to Nepal, then carried two days to the village of fieldwork by porters. Equipment is also expensive (four respirometers were on loan; the oxygen analyser, the Douglas apparatus, the steel pump, the nitrogen cylinder, the pulsemeter cost £770, £75, £255, £180, £70 respectively).

The above measurements are made in order to describe the energy expenditure and the work efficiency of individuals in a community. This necessitates an appreciable number of measurements: they must be carried out on a range of tasks, concern a large sample of people, and repeated on the same subjects in order to properly ascertain inter and intra-individual variability. It is of course unnecessary and unrealistic to want to measure all the activities undertaken in a community. Once in the field, one must first recognise the pattern of daily work in terms of single tasks, then select some for measurement. Minor activities, defined and described with proper care, can be looked up in tables of energy expenditure (Passmore and Durnin, 1955), based on other population groups. But those important in frequency and/or heavy in energy effort merit quantitative measurement: these are activities which the population under study might be expected to perform with improved efficiency, revealing adaptations to prevailing circumstances; these adaptations could be achieved through physique developed in growth and adolescence, or through adjustments in working behaviour. Thus the real interest in measuring energy expenditure in the field is to provide evidence for adaptive changes, rather than merely estimate the level of energy expenditure in the community. The variability displayed by individuals in performing the same task is also well worth considering, often revealing a remarkable range in work efficiency (Edmunson, 1979) which is yet to be fully understood.



Thus in estimating energy expenditure in the Nepalese community, I identified 135 single activities. I took care to distinguish walking on paths of different gradients, and carrying loads of different weights. These activities are both strenuous and frequent throughout the day. They are performed by people of short stature and light weight, a physique which might play a part in reducing the energy cost of carrying loads. Behaviour is also characteristic: the Nepalese carry loads in baskets ("doko") supported on their backs with a head-band, and punctuate their travelling to allow 5-10 minutes rest every half-hour or so; indeed they respect the resting places "bisan") erected regularly along the paths. In addition to walking and carrying, I measured the energy cost of resting, digging fields, ploughing, pounding cereals, and working metals. I took the equipment to where people were engaging in these activities, asking them to wear the respirometer and work as they would under normal conditions. A steptest was also included to measure standardised work performance. I worked with men and women between 15 and 50 years of age, with pregnant and lactating mothers and their non-childbearing counterparts. Five to twenty individuals of each category participated in the measurement of each activity (to total 345 measurements on eight defined activities). Intra-individual variability was fully measured only in the case of resting metabolism, due to the difficulties in effecting the measurements.

### Problems of Implementation in the Field

Indeed it proved a problem to elicit the cooperation of the population. These people, previously left to their ways, understood little of the reason for the presence of foreigners in the village. Not unsurprisingly, the research work was met with some resistance. Measurements of energy expenditure were particularly difficult, especially when I tried to involve the pregnant and lactating women. People often feared the tubes and mouthpieces, and consequently hyperventilated. Women had jewels inserted in their nose which made the use of the noseclip impossible or difficult. The younger ones were quick to sense ridicule and refused to perform outdoor activities with the respirometer. Their reluctance was overcome in the longterm by working with their husbands first, in batches of women friends, or in complete isolation. I also offered a fee to all participants: it was not the benefit to science that would motivate volunteers, but a well bargained remuneration; moreover it compensated for loss of time and for the unpleasantness of the experiment. Many of the difficulties encountered could be foreseen at the start of the project, but as I had hoped, staying in the community one full year gave time to make satisfactory measurements.

### Time Allocation

Direct measurements of energy expenditure need to be coupled with an accurate record of all activities and the amount of time devoted to each daily. Only then can daily energy expenditure be estimated -

multiplying the energy cost of a given task by the time invested in it, summed over all activities. Several methods to determine the allocation of time are at hand: detailed observation budgets, self-annotated diary record, recall questionnaires. The choice of a particular procedure is dependent upon the characteristics of the population (literacy, for example) and conditions in the field, as much as upon the general aims of the research. Indeed there is an inverse relationship between the expediency and acceptability of a study and its degree of precision (Ferro-Luzzi, 1982). In the first months of fieldwork, I chose to apply a method of time allocation which was not too intrusive, and which had been applied to other Nepalese communities. Following Acharya and Bennett (1981), the time-use data was generated on the basis of 'spot check observations', visiting sample households at two randomly-chosen one-hour periods during the day to report on the activities undertaken at that time. A statistical compilation of these observations over all the hours of the day for a period of six months or a year gives information on the frequency and distribution of the community's activities. Thus one advantage of the method is that one can obtain time-allocation data on a large sample for relatively little daily work on the part of the observer. It was soon found however that the people of Salme disperse and cover great distances in the course of their work; often they could not all be reached in the chosen hour interval. In such a case, one has to ask those who can be met the whereabouts and doings of their neighbours or kin. This is a serious shortcoming of the method in terms of data reliability; and in many societies, neither the work of men nor of women takes place in the home or in a fixed location. At this point, I turned to establishing a protocol of time budgets; this involves following individuals throughout their day, recording minute by minute their activities, and results in very accurate and detailed firsthand observations, which can be used in estimating levels of energy expenditure.

To help in continuous time observation, five assistants were chosen, all from Salme village and literate in Nepali. Each was given a digital watch and trained to record the activities of an individual, at a minute interval, in a slim notebook. They were not provided with a pre-existing code of activities, but annotated these in their own words. They worked in two teams, to cover continuously the working hours of the day (from 6 am to 7 pm). If people were to spend the night on the hillside at a fair distance from the village, then they did the same. The assistants were repeatedly instructed not to interfere in the normal pattern of work, as kin or friends might ask them to help with carrying some load or a small child. Diaries were checked and annotated daily, and contained information on time, activity, the geographical area, the presence of children and the social context. Two individuals were followed each day, and received a small fee. Time budgeting, once established as a routine, was found rather successful.

I began with a sample of 32 households who had participated in a food survey the previous year (see the contribution of S. Koppert). These families were not chosen at random, because of general initial animosity towards our work, but were the ones who could be persuaded

to participate by virtue of blood ties or patron-client relationships with our assistants. This does not unduly skew observations as all the villagers are related anyway. I included in the course of the year pregnant women, as soon as their condition could be ascertained; this was a problem indeed since young mothers did not admit they carried child (some believe the foetus 'wanders' in the womb for five months), and clothing (a skirt made from material five meters long, pleated on the stomach, and secured with another long cloth) disguises the state of pregnancy. To record individual variation in working behaviour each adult man and woman was observed on two days, and the total sample (N=78) was covered in three months. In addition, and to disclose seasonal variation, the protocole was repeated on the same sample four times in the course of the year. Thus data was collected on eight days for each individual. Pregnant and lactating mothers, however, constituted a target group (N=10), and were followed two days every month. About 500 time budgets were totalled in the year.

### Evaluation

Although time and manpower consuming when applied to a large sample, and expensive in salaries and remuneration, the continuous observation of individuals offers very detailed information, the wealth of which gives a precise understanding of day to day happenings. Our time budgets reveal in precise hourly terms the diversity of daily activities, and the seasonality of work and leisure. However, since observations were limited to thirteen daylight hours, some working behaviours are not fully represented. Daytime activities, such as agriculture and husbandry, are recorded in their totality, but others, such as rest, lactation and cooking, occur early morning or after dark and are under-estimated; the latter activities are interesting to the extent that they punctuate the working day. Thus the daily budgets measure the total time devoted to the economic tasks, and also reveal the rhyme of activities in terms of productive and non-productive work. They also give precise information on the time necessary to travel on the mountain side and the places covered, on the time investments in childcare, on the importance of social, religious and leisure activities. They document division of labour within a family, the importance of labour exchange between kin or friends ("parma") and of hired labour ("namyak") throughout the agricultural cycle. Finally they witness the distinct lifestyles of the two ethnic groups (Tamang/Ghale and Kami) coexisting in the village, and the degree of their social interaction. The information from time budgets is therefore of interest to scholars of many disciplines. It remains also the only protocole giving data precise enough to be of interest to physiologists.

### Further Aspects of Research

The above plan of research is sufficient for a project which aims to measure the energy expenditure levels in a particular community. However, to answer some important questions in Human Biology, it needs to be complemented with research in related disciplines. The project in Salme village was carried out from 1979 to 1985 by a multidisciplinary team working under the auspices of the C.N.R.S. Estimates of

energy expenditure will be matched with measured energy intakes; this will give a fine appreciation of the energy balance of individuals, and an understanding of the variation existing within a community (Koppert and Panter-Brick, forthcoming). Regular anthropometric measurements complement this information; these were conducted in Salme every three months throughout 2-3 years. Blood, urine and stools samples were also systematically collected for medical analysis (Meyer, forthcoming). Demographic data was established for the villages on the watershed. A number of geographers and of agronomists described the mountain environment, the pattern of land use, possibilities for the intensification of crop rotation, and also aspects of cattle and forest management. Results will hopefully demonstrate the advantages of moving away from the more limited research any one individual can achieve, to a coordinated multidisciplinary synthesis on man in his ecological circumstances.

A research protocole must be complete enough to answer problems of real importance (Castri, 1976; Vayda, 1983); but it must also be kept light to avoid considerable difficulties in implementation. A multidisciplinary project is, first of all, expensive in terms of sending and maintaining in the field the research workers, and in terms of the necessary equipment - with grants less forthcoming in the 1980's. Second, there are problems of organization considering the choice and flexibility of a qualified research team, the time scale and location of the project. Third, longterm presence and interference in the population must be justified to the community and to governments; often this is done by coupling research with aid and development. Some dialogue must take place, and the aims of a project must be made consistent with the policies of local authorities. In Salme, the French Embassy helped towards financing the repair of the school and provided medical supplies. Finally, there are fears for the success of a big project: in having won the participation of the local community in all aspects of research, one must secure it over a number of months until completion. In my experience, people quickly grew tired of endless measurements; conflicts did periodically erupt, especially when work needed to be speeded up or when political factions chose to measure their strenght and debated which benefits should accrue the villagers. My position depended on the voice of my assistants, who were nonetheless caught in a dilemma, having to manipulate their people for my sake and to manipulate me to their own advantage. Over time, the project overcame endless stumbling blocks, and succeeded with patience, tenacity, a blend of humour in dialogue, owing to personal friendships and contracts of remuneration.

## II

## A CRITICAL LOOK AT FIELD RESEARCH

There is today general agreement and awareness that studies of energy expenditure and energy balance do carry important limitations, in terms of the data and theoretical interpretation. Both their reliability and their utility have been questioned.

## Validity of Results

There is first the question of accuracy and reliability of the methodology in the field. The various sources of error attached to energy measurements have been clearly stated by Durnin and Broackway (1959). These are, briefly, inaccurate recording of the duration of activities, failure to define single activities, errors in measuring metabolic cost, untypical behaviour of the subject under observation. To minimize bias, it is crucial to obtain very good time allocation data, as inaccuracies will quickly generate error when multiplying time and energy cost for each activity. Next, sampling activities representatively and measuring the existing range of variation can give better estimates of energy expenditure. The same recommendations apply to the measurement of energy intake (Ferro-Luzzi, 1982). The total margin of error attached to final results may be as much as 10-15% (Durnin, 1978). But this may be acceptable if it represents random "noise" which does not systematically distort results. In any case, published quantitative values of daily energy expenditure and intake can only be accepted as "best" estimates of the "true" level of energy balance.

Some scholars would contend, then, that physiological conclusions based on field research are not validated by such low degree of data accuracy. To be critical of fieldwork data is a virtue but to demean them is a little hasty. Studies in the field are distinct from laboratory experiments (which, of course, are best able to control the sources of measurement error), and their contribution is to take us to local communities and the ecological context; thus objectives may be to measure rates of energy expenditure in everyday working behaviour, rather than to assess work capacity in standardised conditions. For just this reason, and even if they are not perfect, field data have an impact on current knowledge in physiology. This has been felt in the following three aspects. The work of Fox (1953) in Gambia documented that energy balance (shown in fluctuations of weight) need not be achieved over a number of days as frequently considered in the laboratory, but over a matter of months, when a "hungry season" is to be endured each year. In contrast the community in Nepal seems to survive on a tight but stable energy budget throughout the year: there is a regular input of work in tending a number of different crops, which are planted at different altitudes and come to ripen in succession in the course of the year; the monsoon months are nonetheless more demanding in the work effort. The data collected measures the energy balance of individuals over the year's seasonal cycle: such

long period of observation is seldom undertaken in Human Biology, although the problems associated with seasonality are currently gaining much attention (Chambers et al., 1981). Secondly, studies have documented the possibility of population groups living in apparent negative nitrogen balance. In particular, the study of Norgan, Ferro-luzzi & Durnin (1974) in Papua New Guinea gave quantitative indication of the relative risk to pregnant and lactating mothers. These women may neither increase their food intakes, nor afford to reduce their activities but draw upon their body stores of fat when they are bearing or caring for children (Harrison et al., 1975). My project in Nepal grew out of a concern to investigate this problem, and to measure the little-known time and energy stresses associated with motherhood. Thirdly, studies of non-Caucasian populations have led to a revaluation of our standards of health and energy use. The FAO/WHO energy allowances for pregnant women are projected from the costs of building new tissues and bearing physical movement, and recommend an extra 300 Kcal per day in the diet; but the evidence from free-living populations gives a very different picture with respect to "requirements". Again, many communities are capable of remarkable work effort while rather short in stature, light in weight and poorly nourished according to Western standards. Our Nepalese community is another example of this "paradox": men and women are able to carry loads of forty kilos up steep hills, in spite of low levels of iron in their blood and apparent anaemia.

My conviction, then, is that fieldwork data are both important and relevant. If so, they must be communicated to planners, so that practical implications may follow and be rooted in the analysis of this information. Planners are keen to foster aid and development, but often lack the in-depth integrated data that field research should provide. Once again, dialogue must again take place between research workers, officials in power, and villagers who also perceive their needs.

### Theoretical Interpretation

Field studies have also been criticised on the grounds of the limited nature of data interpretation. In concentrating on the single variable of energy, and the ways in which individuals and populations harness it, several studies have been guilty of partiality (to the extent of "calorific obsession") or reductionism towards other important priorities in the local system. Some have too readily equated energetic efficiency with adaptive success, even where energy was not a limiting factor (Smith, 1979). They also have tended to ignore the factors of change (Vayda and McCay, 1975). As a single-stress approach, models of energy flow have been criticised for not accounting or explaining human societies (Burnham, 1983), since social processes play such an important buffer role with the environment, and have their own priorities in the local system.

However, studies in energy use help in quantifying the relationships and interactions of man with his environment (Brooke Thomas et al., 1983). Hence they enable one to describe levels of energy balance

in a community, to account for health and nutritional status, and to research into the regulation of energy balance. Models of energetics also provide concepts and an organising framework (Haas et al., 1977) which help answering some of the leading questions in Human Biology on human variation and human adaptation to the ecological context. It does seem, here, that field studies can avoid many limitations by inscribing themselves in a multidisciplinary effort; the IBP programme accomplished this in the Andes (Baker and Little, 1976), and the C.N.R.S. in the Himalayas (G.R.E.C.O). My own data must await final analysis, but I may here sketch two examples from the Salme community, to support this general contention: human strategies for coping with particular problems of the environment are intelligible from data on energetics, and best interpreted and extended with findings from other disciplines.

### The Mobility of "goth"

The Tamang/Ghale people of Salme live in the village at an altitude of 1850 meters, but exploit an area which extends from 1200 to 3000 meters; it comprises terraced land, communal grazing grounds and forest. In the course of daily work, they cover great distances on terrain abrupt and often difficult. One finds that travel and portering are very expensive in terms of both time and energy. To answer this problem, they rely on building temporary shelters of wooden posts and bamboo mats ("goth" or "gora"), which they carry to the fields, and where one or several family members may elect to stay. The goths are dismantled, carried, and set up again whenever needed. Since individual holdings are fragmented and also scattered, the goths are moved often, every three or four days, from one small terrace to another. This aspect of their social organization is fundamental in the following aspects.

It follows an agronomic rationale. The goths serve to shelter both those working in the fields and those in charge of cattle. The cattle are parked in the goth at night and serve to fertilise the very fields which will be ploughed and planted; thus people avoid the task of carrying dung. The animals are then kept away from standing crops, but taken to the fields as the harvest proceeds to feed on crop residue. Since the crops are planted in careful rotation at different altitudes, the cattle and the goths move seasonally throughout the mountain slope. Broadly speaking, in the monsoon they move from the higher pasture grounds away from the lower and middle altitude grounds where rice, millet and maize are growing; in the dry season, they are taken down from the higher grounds away from the winter crops of wheat and barley. Indeed, the cycle of agricultural work and the movement of cattle are coordinated very tightly, but it is by no means uniform. The displacement of the goths follows a logic or rule which is necessarily different for all households, according to the land and the cattle resources of each family.

The full use of the goth is a means of considerable economy in the work effort, in spite of having to transport these structures (four to five loads of forty kilos a time): the possibility of overnight shelter in the fields cuts down the time and energy spent in travelling to and fro the village, time which may amount to more than an hour of daily commuting. Indeed some people choose to remain in their goth for weeks on end, and return to the village only for provision of foodstuffs or important social events. The goth makes for an intelligent labour distribution. Family members can separate to meet simultaneous labour requirements in the village and on the hillside; distinct families may choose to pool labour and cattle resources in sharing the same goth, and move it to exploit the terraces of their ownership. The goth and its cattle can be rented out to those who do not have the means of fertilising thus and ploughing their fields.

Living in the goth is also an expression of cultural values. People above all enjoy this life where they feel an affinity with the mountain and the oxen, cows, buffaloes, sheep or goats they possess. They express also a taste for a certain independence and mobility, keeping family groups fluid with changing residence.

In all, the mobility of the goths constitutes an excellent strategy to cope with the constraints of the mountain ecosystem. It is, however, the result of a cultural choice made by the population in exploiting the environment. There are other possible lifestyles: the Tamang of villages at lower altitude (Bumtang) have relinquished this mobility in order to intensify their mode of production, while the distinct ethnic group in Salme, the Kami blacksmiths, do not espouse it. Thus the institution of the goth is best interpreted in the framework of an ecological model, which integrates the concepts of both biological and social adaptation (Dyson-Hudson and Little, 1983). It is a strategy answerable to patterns of energy flow, but dictated by cultural and social history.

### The Strategies of Childcare

Mother-child relationships have been until recently (Nerlove, 1974; Jelliffe, 1979; Popkin, 1980; Lee, 1980) a poorly considered area in Human Biology, although clearly they are an important component of a community's adaptation to its ecosystem. The concept of adaptive strategies of childcare fits here more strictly with those of reproductive success and fitness in evolutionary terms. In Salme, I sought to look at the reproductive performance of women in a holistic and multidisciplinary perspective. Few studies have measured the energy expenditure of mothers in field conditions (Blackburn et al., 1976; Schutz et al., 1980); the description of the work pattern of the women in Salme aims to quantify the extra physiological cost involved in pregnancy, lactation and the carrying of small children. From the Weighed Food Survey are estimated the daily individual food intakes of the women and their children. Regular anthropometric and medical measurements reveal their general health and physique, and portray



infant growth in the first three years of life. The time budgets describe in detail the work investments of women, and establish the ways in which they cope both with tasks in the productive sphere, and with the tending of small children. Certainly, most women continue all activities up to the term of pregnancy, performing even strenuous tasks such as the carrying of wood, but may be working at a slower rate. After the delivery of the baby in the husband's home ("ghar"), and 8 to 12 days seclusion, they resume their usual responsibilities. Since they must always be with the baby to breastfeed, they carry it in a cot ("jholangue" or "goyong"), slung on the back and supported by a head-strap. This leaves them free to perform their ordinary tasks, and even carry loads with the cot secured on top. Most mothers cannot afford to discard their economic duties for long, except in times of seasonal lulls. As the baby grows older (around age two) it is increasingly left behind to play in the village, or under the supervision of another family member.

There are however established differences in childcare strategies between the two ethnic groups living in Salme. The Kami women need not be so mobile, and to always carry their children, since they have very few fields outside the village. They marry and live with their spouse at a younger age and have children on average every two years, whom they feed and look after rather well. In contrast, the Tamang/Ghale retain strong contact with their natal home ("Maithi") away from the husband, and achieve smaller family size, with possibly comparatively less healthy children. The aims of this research are to integrate the various energetic, nutritional, demographic and cultural factors in the analysis of the data, to explain the different practices of childcare, to discuss which are successful, and how these strategies may be seen as components of adaptation to local ecological circumstances.

## Conclusion

Field studies operate within the limits of the possible and the acceptable, working with constraints of time, finance and personnel on the part of the anthropologist, and of willingness on the part of the community. In spite of some shortcomings, they contribute importantly in two ways: in giving a quantitative appreciation of the levels of energy balance in an ecological context, and in offering a perspective to answer some theoretical questions on human variation and adaptation to local environments.

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## पाल्पाका सेन राजाहरूका अठाइ अप्रकाशित पत्रहरू<sup>1</sup>

टेकबहादुर श्रेष्ठ

यो लेख पाल्पाका सेन राजाहरू संग सम्बद्ध १८ ऐतिहासिक पत्रहरू प्रकाशमा ल्याउने, उद्देश्यले प्रस्तुत गरिएको हो। २०४० सालमा गण्डकी प्रदेशको इतिहासका लागि सामग्री संकलन गर्ने सिलिसिलामा पाल्पा, रामपुर गाउँ पञ्चायतका भू.पू. प्रधान पञ्च श्री भूपराज उपाध्यायबाट यस संकलनका १-८, १०-१५, १७ र १८ संख्याका पत्रहरू प्राप्त भएका हुन्। रामपुरकै श्री डिल्लीराम गौतम र श्री कोशराज रेग्मीबाट क्रमशः ६ र १६ संख्याका पत्रहरू प्राप्त भएका हुन्। यी पत्रहरूबाट पाल्पाको इतिहासमा निकै प्रकाश परेको हुँदा यस बारेमा यहाँ संक्षिप्त चर्चा गर्ने प्रयास गरिएको छ।

नेपालको मध्यकालिन इतिहासमा गण्डकी प्रदेशका चौबीसी राज्यको महत्वपूर्ण स्थान रहेको छ। चौबीसी राज्यहरूमा पाल्पा राज्यले एक शक्तिशाली राज्यको भूमिका खेलेको पाइन्छ। मध्यकालको उत्तरार्द्धमा घर संख्याको आधारमा त्यस राज्यको नाम दिइने चलन अनुसार काठमाडौं उपत्यकाका राज्यहरूमा सबभन्दा बढी जनसंख्या भएको ललितपुर “२४ हजार” कर्णाली प्रदेशका बाइसी राज्यहरूमा जुम्ला “२२ हजार” कहलाए भैं पाल्पालाई “२६ हजार” पाल्पा भनिन्थ्यो<sup>१</sup>। यस दृष्टिले पाल्पा एक ठूलो राज्य रहेको थियो भने यसको भू-भाग पहाड र तराई प्रदेशमा फैलिएको हुनाले अरू चौबीसी राज्यमहरूको तुलना यो राज्य आर्थिक दृष्टिले पनि निकै सम्पन्न रहेको थियो।

पाल्पाका राजाहरूमा मुकुन्द सेन प्रथम एक महत्वाकांक्षी राजा थिए। यिनका पालाका ऐतिहासिक सामग्री धेरै अभाव छ। हालै यिनलाई संकेत गर्ने एउटा पानसको अभिलेख<sup>२</sup> र बुटवलमा प्रकाशित एउटा शिलालेख<sup>३</sup> पनि प्रकाशित भएका छन्। यिनको शासनकाल वि.सं. १५७५ देखि १६०० सम्म मानिएको पाइन्छ। यिनले पाल्पा राज्यलाई सैनिक दृष्टिले मजबुत पारी आफ्नो पूर्वजद्वारा स्थापित सानो राज्यलाई बिस्तार गरेका थिए। यिनले पूर्वी तराई प्रदेशमा राज्य बिस्तार गरी यस क्षेत्रको अस्तित्व जोगाएका थिए। अर्को तिर यिनले काठमाडौं-उपत्यकाका प्रसिद्ध राजा यक्ष मल्लको मृत्यु पश्चात

विभाजित तथा राजनैतिक अस्थिरता भएको उपत्यकामा पटक पटक आक्रमण गरेका थिए<sup>४</sup> । यिनले पाल्पा राज्यलाई निकै ठूलो राज्यमा परिणत गरेका थिए। यदि यिनले यो विजय अभियानलाई योजनाबद्ध रूपले अगाडि बढाएका भए श्री ५ बडामहाराजाधिराज पृथ्वीनारायण शाहभन्दा दुई शताब्दी जति अघि नै नेपालको एकिकरण अभियान सम्पन्न हुने थियो भन्ने आचार्यज्यूको भनाई ५ सत्य देखिन्छ।

यो विशाल पाल्पा राज्य धेरै समयसम्म डल्लो रूप रहन नसकी विभिन्न राज्यहरूमा विभाजित भयो। यो राज्य विभाजन जस्तो घटना नेपालमा पहिलो पल्ट घटेको थिएन। यस भन्दा पहिले कर्णाली प्रदेशमा राज्य अभयमल्ल पछि विशाल रस राज्य टुक्रिए बाइस र पछि गण्डकी प्रदेशमा चौबीस राज्यको स्थापना भएका थिए भने काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकाको मल्ल राज्य यहा मल्ल पछि विभाजन भएको थियो । यस किसिमको विभाजन एकातिर राष्ट्रिय एकता कमजोर पार्दथ्यो भने अर्कोतिर राज्यहरूलाई आ-आफ्नो अस्तित्व रक्षा गर्नाका साथै समृद्ध पार्ने समस्या खडा गर्दथ्यो। पाल्पा राज्यको विभाजन अनुसार मुकुन्द सेनका छोराहरू मध्ये विनायक सेनले बुटवल र माणिक सेनले पाल्पा राज्यमा शासन चलाए।

विभाजन पछिको पाल्पा राज्यको पहिलो राजा माणिक सेन भए । सेन वंशावली अनुसार ६ माणिक सेनपछि पिरोज सेन, जगदीश सेन, पृथ्वी सेन क्रमशः राजा भएका थिए भने पाँचौ पुस्ताका त्रिलोक सेनलाई युवराज मात्र भनी माणिक सेनको वंश टुटेको कुरा थाहा हुन्छ। पाल्पाको सेन राजाहरूको विस्तृत वंशावली प्रकारमा आएको छैन। यिनीहरूको वंश वृद्धा जस्ते सेन वंशावली मात्र प्रकारमा आएको हुँदा यताबाट यी राजाहरूका शासनकालबारे थाहा पाउन गाह्रो छ। अर्कोतिर, शुरु शुरुमा यी राजाहरूका ऐतिहासिक पत्रहरू प्रकारमा नआइसकेकोले यस बारेमा अध्ययन गर्न अरु गाह्रो भएको पाइन्छ। यसो हो ता पनि सामान्यतः एकजना राजालाई २५ वर्षको शासन अवधि दिइने इतिहासकारहरूको चलनअनुसार चार जनाको १०० वर्ष शासनकाल हुन आउँछ सेनको शासनकाल वि.सं. १६११ देखि शुरु हुने हुदाँ वि.सं. १७१० सम्म चार पुस्ताले राज्य चलाएको देखिन्छ। त्रिलोक सेनलाई राजामान्दा यिनको राज्यकाल वि.सं. १७११ देखि १७३५ सम्म मान्नु पर्ने हुन्छ।

राजा भूपति सेनको वि.सं. १७११ र १७१५ का दुई पत्रहरू पाइएका छन्<sup>७</sup> । यी दुई मध्ये पहिलो पत्रलाई मुकुन्द सेन प्रथम पछिको पहिलो प्रामाणिक पत्र मान्न सकिन्छ। यो पत्रमा "....महाराज राज्ञी श्री रूक्मावती देवीनां श्री महाराजाधिराज श्री श्रीमद्भूपति सेन ..."भन्ने वाक्यांश परेको तथा मुकाम पाल्पा दिइएको हुँदा भूपति सेन पाल्पाका राजा थिए भन्ने कुरो निश्चित छ। तर वंशावलीमा भने भूपति सेनको नामोल्लेख कतै नपरेको हुँदा यिनी कस्का छोरा र कतै समयमा राजा भएका थिए भन्ने बारेमा विचार गर्न आवश्यक हुन आउँछ।

यस संकलनमा भूपति सेनका दुई पत्रहरूबाट उपर्युक्त बारेमा विचार गर्न निकै सहयोग मिलेको छ। माथि दिइएअनुसार त्रिलोक सेनको राज्यकाल वि.सं. १७११ देखि १७३५ सम्म मानिएको छ । वि.सं. १७११ र १७१५ का पत्रहरू यही राज्यकाल भित्र पर्ने भएकाले त्रिलोक सेनको समयसंग मेल राएको देखिन्छ "अर्को कुरो वंशावलीमा ४ त्रिलोक सेनकी आमा रूपमावती दिइएको छ भने यस संकलनको पहिलो पत्रमा भूपति सेनकी आमा रूक्मावती भएको देखिन्छ । यसबाट यहाँ रूक्मावतीलाई नै रूपमावती भनिएको हुन सक्छ भन्ने बुझिन्छ। यस कुराबाट त्रिलोक सेनको अर्को नाम भूपति सेन रहनु धेरै सम्भावना रहेको छ तापनि यस बारेमा अरु खोजी हुनु आवश्यक देखिन्छ।

भूपति सेनका (त्रिलोक सेन) पिता पृथ्वी सेनको देहान्तपछि अर्थात् वि.सं. १७११ मा भूपति सेन र राजमाता रूक्मावतीको संयुक्त शासन चलेको पाइन्छ। राजा नाबालक हुनु आदि विभिन्न कारणले राजमाताले राजकाजमा सक्रिय भाग लिएको उदाहरण काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकाका मल्ल राज्यहरूमा निकै पाइन्छन्<sup>९</sup> । वि.सं. १७११ को यस पत्रमा संयुक्त शासकले वंशमणि उपाध्यायसंग छपावन रु. २१०१- लिई तिलकपुरमा कुलो लाग्ने जग्गा दिएको कुरो परेको छ। यसको चार वर्ष पछि नै अर्थात् वि.सं. १७१५ मा भूपति सेनले, वंशमणि उपाध्यायलाई पुनः छपावन र १००१- लिई कुरा विर्ता गरिदिएको पत्रबाट यिनले एकलोटी शासन चलाएको कुरा स्पष्ट हुन्छ। राज्य विभाजन हुँदा विनायक सेनले नारायणी नदीको पश्चिमी समतल भूमि 'बुटबल' राज्य पाए। यिनले आफ्नो नाममा राज्यको नामकरण गरी बुटबललाई 'विनायकपुर' राखेका थिए<sup>१०</sup> । वि.सं. १८६४ सम्म पनि

बुटवललाई विनयाकपुर भनिदै गरेको कुरा बुटवलस्थित नारायण मन्दिर अगाडिको श्री ५ गीवार्णयुद्ध विक्रम शाहको अभिलेखबाट ११ पनि पुष्टि हुन्छ। यस किसिमको चलन अरु राज्यमा पनि चलेको पाइन्छ। अठ्ठाह्रो राताव्दीका उत्तरार्द्धमा चौबीसी मध्येको पर्वत राज्यका प्रसिद्ध राजा मलेवम मल्लले आफ्नो राज्यलाई सैनिक आर्थिक दृष्टिले मजबूतपारी नाममा राज्यको नामकरण गरी 'मलेवम' राखेका थिए। १२

विनायक सेनपछि जसु सेन, दामोदर सेन, बलभद्र सेन र अम्बर सेन क्रमशः बुटवलमा राजा भएका देखिन्छन् १३ विनायक सेनपछिका राजाहरूमा अम्बर सेन एक प्रतापी राजा थिए। यिनको राज्यकाल वि.सं. १७११ देखि १७३५ सम्म रहेको अनुमान गरिएको छ तापनि यिनको वि.सं. १७५१ को पत्र १४ प्राप्त भएकोले यो अनुमानित समयभन्दा बढी शासन यिनले चलाएको देखिन आएको छ यिनको यो लामो शासन कालमा विभाजित पाल्पाका तात्कालिक राजाको वंश टुट्न गएको हुँदा यिनले सो राज्यलाई बुटवल राज्यमा मिलाएका थिए भन्ने ह्यामिल्टनको भनाई १५ रहेको छ। अर्कोतिर वंशावलीमा १६ अम्बर सेनले पाल्पामा चौतारा पद सम्हालेको तथा धेरै उद्योग गरेपछि पाल्पालाई आफ्नो राज्यमा गाभेको उल्लेख परेको छ। अम्बर सेनको वि.सं. १७५१ को पत्रमा पाल्पा मुकाम दिइएको हुँदा यिनले पाल्पामा पनि शासन चलाएको कुराको पुष्टि हुन्छ। यिनका छोरा गन्धर्व सेनले जारीगरेका पत्रहरूमा बुटवल, पाल्पा आदि विभिन्न स्थानहरूलाई मुकाम बनाएको उदाहरणबाट पनि बुटवल र पाल्पा एउटै राज्यमा परिणत भइसकेको कुरा प्रमाणित हुन्छ। अम्बर सेनले कुन मितिमा पाल्पालाई राज्यमा समावेश गरेका थिए भन्ने बारेमा निश्चित गर्न गाह्रो छ तापनि यो कार्य वि.सं. १७१० मा १७ नभएर वि.सं. १७१५ र १७५१ बीचको कुनै पनि समयमा भएको देखिन्छ।

अम्बर सेनले विभाजित बुटवल र पाल्पालाई एउटै राज्य बनाई एक महत्वपूर्ण कार्य गरेका थिए यसैले पनि यिनले आफ्नो प्रशस्तिमा १८ ".....श्री श्रीमद्राजराजेश्वर...." लेखाएको देखिन्छ। यस अर्थमा यिनले अरु सेन राजाहरूले भन्दा बेग्लै प्रशस्ति चलाएको पाइन्छ। यस किसिमको चलन अरु राज्यमा पनि देखिन्छ। काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकाका कान्तिपुर राज्यका प्रसिद्ध राजा प्रताप मल्लले आफ्नो प्रशस्तिमा 'नेपालेश्वर' १९ लेखाएको पाइन्छ।



यस संकलनका वि.सं. १७४१ र १७५१ का दुईपत्रहरू मध्ये वि. सं. १७४१ को पत्रमा २० राजाको नाम दिइएको छैन तर यो पत्र अम्बर सेनको पालोको हो भन्ने देखिन्छ। सेतमा पानीको अंश बाँड्ने सम्बन्धमा भएको भगडा छिनिदिएको कुरो यसमा परेको छ। वि.सं. १७५१ मा अम्बरसेनले मणिराम उपाध्याय, जीवन उपाध्याय र ऋषि उपाध्याय बीच भएको भगडा छिनिदिएको थिए २१। यसरी राजाले जनताबीच भएको भगडा सोभैं छिनि दिने न्याय व्यवस्था त्यसताका भएको कुरो यसबाट प्रष्टिन्छ। गन्धर्व सेन, अम्बर सेनका छोरा थिए। यिनका वि.सं. १७५८ देखि १७६४ सम्मका पत्रहरू पाइएका छन्। यिनले आफ्नो लामो शासनकालमा गुल्मी र राँचीको सहयोगले बलढयाङका २२ (बलिहाङ्ग) सामन्त शासकलाई आफ्नो अधिनमा ल्याई महत्वपूर्ण कार्य गरेका थिए। यस विजयमा संलग्न तीनै राज्यहरूले विजित प्रदेश बाँडी लिएका थिए। २३ यसरी गन्धर्व सेनले पाल्पालाई परिचमत्पर् अरु विस्तार गरेका थिए। त्यसताका यिनको गोरखासंग निकै राम्रो सम्बन्ध रहेको बुझिन्छ। यिनले आफ्नी छोरी कौशल्यावती विवाह गोरखाका राजा नरभूपाल शाहसंग गराइ दिएका थिए २४। रानी कौशल्यावती राष्ट्र निर्माता श्री ५ बडामहाराजाधिराज पृथ्वी नारायण शाहको जन्म भएको थियो।

गन्धर्व सेनका पत्रहरूमा वि.सं. १७५८ को यो पत्र २५ पहिलो देखापरेको छ। यसमा गन्धर्व सेनले किसान गाउँमा जग्गा बन्धक राखी धनपति उपाध्यायसंग रु १३१- लिएको कुरो छ। नेपालको आर्थिक इतिहासमा जग्गा बन्धक राखी लिइएको रकम मध्ये यो रकम सबभन्दा कम भएको देखिन्छ। यस्तै गरी राजा तथा राजकुमारहरूले सापट लिएका रकममा राजकुमार बहादुर शाहले वि.सं. १८३१ मा नुवाकोटमा ज्ञानदेउ धामीसंग लिएको रु १२१५० सबभन्दा कम रकम भएको २६ बुझिन्छ। कहिले काहीँ राजपरिवारका सदस्यहरूलाई यत्ति थोरै रकमको राँचो पनि पर्दो रहेछ भन्ने कुरो यसबाट थाहा हुन्छ।

गन्धर्व सेनले विभिन्न मितिमा विभिन्न व्यक्तिहरूलाई गरिदिएका पत्रहरू आर्थिक विषयसंग सम्बद्ध छन्। आर्थिक इतिहासमा वित्त, गुठी आदि आवादी जग्गाको निकै महत्व रहेको थियो कुरा वित्त, सेवा वित्त जस्ता वित्तका अनेक भेद थिए। वित्त जग्गा प्रायः राजाका प्रिय व्यक्तिहरू, प्रशासक,

पण्डित आदि वर्गको हातमा बढी पर्दथ्यो। गन्धर्व सेनले वि. सं. १७५६ मा धनपति उपाध्यायलाई वितर्ता दिएका थिए। यिनले वि.सं. १७७१ मा धनपतिलाई कुरा वितर्ता दिएका थिए यसैगरी यिनले वि.सं. १७७५ र १७८५ मा अनन्त उपाध्यायलाई कान्त जोशीलाई वि.सं. १७८० मा र वि.सं. १७६४ मा नारायण उपाध्यायलाई वितर्ता दिएका थिए। अहिले सम्म २७ यिनका शासनकालमा प्रकाशित सामग्रीमा वि.सं. १७६४ को पत्र पछिल्लो मान्न सकिन्छ।

गन्धर्व सेनपछि मुकुन्द सेन द्वितीय पाल्पाका राजा भए। यिनका वि.सं. १८०८ देखि १८३६ सम्मका पत्रहरू प्राप्त छन्। यी मध्ये वि.सं. १८०८ को पत्र २८ आज सम्म प्रकाशित पत्रहरूमा पहिलो देखा पर्छ। यसमा यिनले जग्गा बन्धक राखी परमानन्द जैशीसंग रु १११८।- लिएको कुरो छ। यिनले वि.सं. १८२० मा परमानन्दलाई पुनः वितर्ता दिएका थिए।

महादत्त सेन वि. सं. १८३७ देखि १८५० सम्म पाल्पाका राजा भएको देखिन्छ। यिनी निकै चल्तापूजा थिए। यूवराज छँदै यिनी राजकाजमा सक्रिय थिए। वि.सं. १८२६ मा यिनले रामु उपाध्यायलाई वितर्ता दिएका थिए। वि. सं. १८२७ मा गजरकोटटारबाट गरिदिएको पत्रमा २९ यिनले जग्गा बन्धक राखी कृष्णनन्दसंग रु २००।- लिएका थिए। यो गजरकोटटार तात्कालिक गजरकोट राज्यमा पर्दथ्यो। गजरकोट चौबीसी राज्य मध्येको एउटा सानो राज्य थियो ३० यो राज्य २ हजार धिरिङ राज्यबाट विभाजन भई 'नौवीस गजरकोट' भएको थियो। यहाँ सेन वंशका राजाहरूले शासन गरेका थिए। यहाँका अन्तिम राजालिलु सेन थिए भनिन्छ। यो सानो राज्यले चौबीसी राज्यको आन्तरिक राजनीतिमा पाल्पालाई साथ दिएको थियो। यहाँ गजरकोटलाई मुकाम बनाएको हुँदा महादन्त सेनले त्यसताकाको चलनअनुसार गजरकोटलाई आफ्नो पक्षमा मिलाउने सिलसिलामा गजरकोटको भ्रमण गरेको हुन वा यसताका गजरकोट पाल्पा राज्यमा गाभिसकेको थियो भन्ने कुरो स्पष्ट हुँदैन।

महादत्त सेनले आफू राजा भएपछि विभिन्न व्यक्तिहरूलाई वितर्ता दिएका थिए। यिनले वि.सं. १८५० मा भुवनेश्वर नाथलाई कुरा वितर्ता दिएका थिए ३१ यो पत्र यिनका पालाका पछिल्लो पत्र भएको देखिन्छ। यिनले कारीराम जैशीलाई सरिदार पदमा नियुक्त गरी १०० मुरी उब्जनी हुने सेत जागीर दिएका थिए ३२ । यसमा विक्रम संवत् अर्थात् नेपालमा प्रचलित कुने

संवत् नदिएर सन ११६४ दिइएको छ। यो सन् इस्वी संवत् नभएर हिजरी संवत् भएको बुझिन्छ। यसमा सामान्यत (११६४+६५० = १८१४) जोडे विक्रम संवत् हुन्छ भन्ने कुरो महादत्त सेनको वि.स. १८४४ को अभिलेखबाट ३३ बुझिन्छ। यसमा विक्रम, शाक र सन् संवत् दिइएका छन्। यहाँ सन् ११६४ मा ६५० जोडी वि.सं. १८४४ र ५१५ जोडी शाक संवत् १७०६ भएको पाइन्छ तापनि यो सन्मा ६५० जोडी विक्रम संवत् हुन्छ भन्ने नियम सबैमा लागू हुँदैन भन्ने कुरो अर्को उदाहरण बाट ३४ स्पष्ट भएको छ। यो सन् संवत्को चलन वि.सं. १८६४ सम्म चल्दै आएको कुरो बुटवल स्थित नारायण मन्दिरको शिलापत्रमा विक्रम संवत् र सन् संवत्को प्रयोग भएबाट प्रस्टिन्छ। महादत्त सेनले गोरखाको एकीकरण अभियानमा सैनिक सहयोग दिएर महत्वपूर्ण कार्य गरेका थिए। यिनले राजकुमार बहादुर शाहबाट सहयोग गरेवापत गुल्मी अर्घा र राँचीका साथै प्रशस्त सम्पत्ति पाएका थिए ३५ । यिनले पाल्पामा 'श्रीनगर' को निर्माण गराएका थिएर यस कार्यमा छव्विस हजार पञ्चको श्रम परेको थियो भन्ने कुरो अभिलेखबाट ३६ प्रष्ट हुन्छ।

पृथ्वीपाल सेन पाल्पाका सेन वंशमा अन्तिम राजा थिए। यिनी वि.सं. १८५१ मा राजा भएका थिए। हीमानन्द उपाध्यायलाई कुरा विर्ता गरिदिएको यो पत्र यिनको शासनकालको पहिलो पत्र ३७ भएको देखिन्छ । यिनले वि.सं. १८५२ मा कुलो फोड्नेलाई रु १०११- दण्ड दिने व्यवस्था बाँधेका थिए ३८ । यसबाट यिनी राज्यमा सिंचाइको व्यवस्था गरी कृषि उत्पादनमा वृद्धि गर्ने कुरोमा निकै चासो लिन्थे भन्ने बुझिन्छ। वि.सं. १७११ मा नै पाल्पामा सिंचाइको व्यवस्था भइसकेको देखिन्छ ३९ ।

पृथ्वीपाल सेनले वि.सं. १८५१ देखि १८६१ सम्मको अवधिमा राजनैतिक तथा आर्थिक संकट निकै व्यहोर्नु परेको थियो। यिनी र श्री ५ रणबहादुर शाह बीच मेल मिलाप थिएन। रणबहादुर शाह कार्शीबाट फर्केपछि पृथ्वीपाल सेनलाई उनकी बहिनीसंग विवाह गर्ने बहना गरी काठमाडौं बोलाइयो। काठमाडौं उत्रने वित्तिकै पृथ्वीपाल सेन र सेनका भारदारहरू पकडिए। यसको लगत्तै वि.सं. १८६१ मा अमरसिंह थापाको नेतृत्वमा गएको फौजले पाल्पा विजय ग-यो ४० । पृथ्वीपाल सेन वि.सं. १८६३ वैशाख १५ मा रणबहादुर शाहको हत्याको अभियोगमा मारिए ४१ ।

राजा भूपति सेनदेसि पृथ्वीपाल सम्मका प्रकाशित पत्रहरूको शिराभागमा 'श्री राम श्रीभवानी ऋषि केशों जयत' शब्दहरू परेका छन्। कृष्णगण्डकीले सिंचेको भूमि वैष्णव क्षेत्र मानिएको पाइन्छ यस नदीको प्रवाह संगसंगै वैष्णव सम्प्रदायको लहर चलेको थियो भन्ने कुरो यसका निकट वती राज्य पाल्पा पर्वत, तनहुँ, गुल्मी आदिका राजाहरू वैष्णव सम्प्रदायमा अन्तर्गतका राम र कृष्ण भक्त देसिएबाट पनि स्पष्ट हुन्छ।

नेपालमा विभिन्न राजवंशले बेग्ला बेग्लै सालका प्रशस्ति चलाएको पाइन्छन्। पाल्पाका सेन राजाहरूले आफ्नो प्रशस्ति स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायणेत्यादि विविध विरुदावली विराजमान मानोन्नत श्री मन्महाराजाधिराज श्री श्री (राजाको नाम) देवानां सदा समर विजयिनाम् शैलीमा चलाएको पाइन्छ। यही शैली तनहुँ, मकवानपुर आदिका सेन राजाहरूले अपनाएका छन्। आठ टीका शाह वंशका राजाहरूले भने आफ्नो प्रशस्तिमा रूपनारायणेत्यादिको सट्टामा 'श्री गिरिराजचक्र चुडामणि नारायणेत्यादि' राखेको पाइन्छ। गुल्मीका शाह राजाहरू जो आठ टीका राजवंशमा पर्दैनन् कालामकवानी कहलाएका थिए। यिनीहरूले सेन राजाहरूले भैं प्रशस्ति चलाएका थिए<sup>42</sup>। काठमाण्डौं-उपत्यकाका राजा जयस्थिति मल्लले आफ्नो प्रशस्तिमा 'असुरनारायणेत्यादि शब्दको प्रयोग गरेका छन्<sup>43</sup> भने अरु केही मल्ल राजाहरूले 'दैत्यनारायण' 'लक्ष्मीनारायण' शब्दको प्रयोग गरेको<sup>44</sup> देखिन्छ पर्वतका मल्ल राजाहरूको विशेष प्रशस्ति पाइन्दैन तर यिनीहरूले 'स्वस्ति श्री मन्महाराजा (राजाको नाम) देव' मात्र भनी काम चलाएको पाइन्छ<sup>45</sup>। यसरी प्रशस्तिको स्वरूप राजवंश पिच्छै केही न केही फरक भएको पाइन्छ।

पाल्पाका सेन राजाहरूले जारी गरेका विभिन्न पत्रहरूमा बुटवल, पाल्पा प्रभास, दहौ, श्रीनगर किसानवारी आदि मुकामहरूको उल्लेख परेको छ। यसबाट त्यसताका राजाहरू राज्यका विभिन्न प्रदेशमा गई राज्य वा युद्ध संचालन गर्दथे भने अर्को तिर यिनीहरू जनताका समस्यासंग प्रत्यक्ष परिचित हुन सक्दथे भन्ने कुरो स्पष्ट हुन्छ।

पाल्पाको यी ऐतिहासिक पत्रहरू तात्कालिक राजनैतिक तथा आर्थिक इतिहासमा निकै प्रकाश पार्ने भएकाले पाल्पा सम्बन्धी अध्ययन गर्ने पाठकहरूलाई निकै सहयोग मिल्ने आशा लिन सकिन्छ। अन्तमा यस

संकलनका पत्रहरू देखाइ सहयोग गर्नु हुन रामपुरका श्री मूपराजव उपाध्याय, श्री डिल्लीराम गौतम तथा श्री कोशराज रेग्मी प्रति आभार व्यक्त गर्न चाहन्छु।

## एतिहासिक सामग्री

(१)

राम

१. स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायणेत्यादि विविध विरूदावली विराज -
२. मान मानोन्नत महाराज राज्ञी श्री रूक्मावती देवीनां
३. श्री महाराजाधिराज श्री श्री मदभुपति सेन देवा -
४. नां सदा रामर विजयिनां -
५. वंसमनि उपाध्याके वृत्ति दिहल तिलकपुर कृ -
६. ला पानि जेठे ठुठरवैक फाइल सिवान
७. के दिहल छपावन रूपैया २०० सय दुइ वा -
८. धक रूपैया मह पारल इति संवत् १७११
९. वैशाख वदि ५ मुकाम पालपाक कोटमह

(२)

राम

१. स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायणेत्यादि विविध विरूदावलि विराजमान मानो (न्नत) श्री
२. महाराजाधिराज श्री श्रीमदभुपति सेन देवानां सदा समर विजयिनां
३. वंसमनि उपाध्याके वृत्ति दिहल कृस नाइके
४. नि डिहि समेत दिहल छपावन रूपैया १०० एकसय इति संवत्
५. १७१५ वैशाख वदि १२ रोज भौमे मुकाम जोगे -- निकट

(३)

**राम**

१. स्वस्ति श्रीउपाध्या चंद्रमनि तथा उपाध्या गजाध -
२. र तथा उपाध्या निलकंठ के अंश पाच मिलि
३. प्रछिन्न के दिहल विहरि मल्यांग के छेउ के
४. षंड पानि पाच ५ अंश उमरके चार अंश उपरके षं -
५. डके पैडाके वियाज कातिके छेत कसिहा -
६. निके आधा जेठास उतिक चंद्रमनि पाध्याके अं -
७. श आजु से फिरि भगरा नास्ति एहि वातके सा -
८. छि उपाध्या हरिहर साछि उपाध्या विरभद्र साछि उ -
९. पाध्या पितांवर साछि उषध्या मनिकंठ साछि पंडि -
१०. त मनोहर इतिसंवत् १७४१ समये भाद्र शुदि ७ रोज यक

(४)

**राम**

**श्री भवानी हषिकेशो जयतः**

१. " स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायणेत्यादि वि (विध) विरूदावली विराजमान
२. मानोन्नत महाराजाधिराज श्री श्री श्री मद्राजराजेश्वर
३. श्री श्री मदंस्वर सेन देवानां सदा समर विजयिनां
४. मनिराम उपाध्या जीअन उपाध्या रिषि उपाध्या तीनिउ
५. भाई न्याइ श्रेलहि द (भ) गरा प्रछीन के दिहल केरि --
६. -- भै भगरा करे तो चार निसान गुनहगारि देइ इति
७. संवत् १७५१ साल असार शुदी १३ मुकाम पालपा

(५)

**श्रीराम**

१. स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायणेत्यादि विविध विरूदावलि
२. विराजमान मानोन्नत महाराजाधिराज श्री श्री
३. मदगनधर्व सेन देवानां सदा समर विजयीनाम्
४. धनपति पाध्याके हाथ बाधा राषल कीसान

५. गावके भुइ आपन घेत से पछिव वारे दषिन वो -
६. र घाघ के सिवान पछिवओर पैडा राषिके को
७. लिया के सिवान उत्तरवारे पनिवार के मभा
८. र के सिभुकेवार षयरकेवोट पूर्ववोर पैडा राषि
९. के आपन सिवान कुलासे हेट निकास रा -
१०. पि दिहल रूपेआ १३ अक्षरेपि तेरह जव रु -
११. पेआ देइ तव छुटे संवत् १७५८ भादव वदि १३ दछा

(६)

### श्रीराम श्री भवानी हषिकेशी जयतः

१. स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायणेत्यादि विविध विरूदावलि
२. विराजमान मानोन्नत महाराजाधिराज श्री श्री म -
३. दगन्धर्व सेन देवानां सदा समर विजयीनाम्
४. धनपति पाध्याके डिहि कसाटा वृत्तिक वृत्ति दिहल
५. वेभाडके सोभा पूर्ववोर कीला दक्षिण वोर आपन वृ -
६. त्ति के सोभा उत्तरवोर वृत्ति के सोभा पुछहार पछीववो -
७. र वृत्ति आपन सिवान के दिहल इति संवत् १७५६
८. चैत्र सुदि ४ सु. पिलवा

(७)

### श्रीराम श्री भवानि रीषीकेशी जयतीः

१. स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायणेत्यादि विविध विरूदाव -
२. ली वीराजमान मानोन्नत श्री महाराजाधिराज
३. श्री श्री श्री मदगंधर्व सेन देवानां सदा समर वी -
४. जइनां
५. धनपति पाध्याके वृत्ती दिहल अपने हाथ वा -

६. धा रहल जे डिहि से डिहि कृस वृत्त के दिहल
७. इति आस्वीन सुदि ८ रोज ३ मुकाम पालपा
८. संवत् १७७१

(८)

**श्रीराम**  
**श्री भवानी हणिकेशी जयतः**

१. स्वस्ति श्रीरूपनारायणेतयादी वीवीध वीरदावली वी -
२. राजमान मानोन्नत श्री माहाराजाधीराज श्री श्री श्री मदगं -
३. धर्व सेन देवानां सदा समर वीजइनाम्
४. अनन्त पाध्या के वृत्ती दीहल किसान गावमह आपन
५. भेत के पुछाहार पूर्ववर ढुंगाना के डहर पछी -
६. ववर जेसी वनीया के दही सही संवत् १७७५
७. समर चैत्र वढी ३० रोज ५ मुकाम बटवली सुभं

(९)

**श्रीराम**  
**श्री भवानी हणिकेशी जयतः**

१. स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायणेतयादि वीवीध वीरदावली वी -
२. राजमान मानोन्न श्री माहाराजाधीराज श्री श्री
३. श्री मदगंधर्व सेन देवानां सदा समर वीजइनां
४. कांत जैरीके कृस वृत्ता के दीहल मटीयानी जे -
५. त डीही मित के दीहल पछिववर जोला सा -
६. ध उत्तरवर पुनी जोला साध पूर्ववर पोषन्या -
७. ल के साध निकास राणी के वृत्ता के दीहल सं -
८. वत् १७८० समपू मार्ग वढी रोज ३ मुकाम प्र -
९. मास सुभम



(१०)

## श्रीराम श्री भवानी हणिकेरौ जयतः

१. स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायनेत्यादि वीवीध वीरदाव -
२. ली वीराजमान मानोननत श्री महाराजाधी -
३. राज श्री श्री श्रीमदगंधर्व सेन देवानां सदा स -
४. मर वीजइनाम्
५. अनन्त पाध्या धनपाती पाध्याके कृस वृत्ता के
६. दीहल कीसान गाव के डीही पुरुव उत्तर डह -
७. र के साध पछीव ठीक रत्नेस्वर जैसी के सा -
८. ध पछीव जेनेकर तहोसे वृत्ता के दिहल संव -
९. त १७८० मार्ग वदी १२ रोज ३ सु. पाल्पा सुभं

(११)

## श्रीराम श्री भवानी हणिकेरौ जयतः

१. स्वस्ति श्री रूपनारायणेत्यादि विविध वि -
२. रुदावलि विराजमान मानोन्नत श्री माहा
३. राजाधिराज श्री श्री श्रीमदगंधर्व सेन देवा-
४. नां सदा समर विजयीनाम्
५. आगे नारायेन पाध्याके डुम्रि वोध्या जेत
६. मह कुला के डोरा वेजहाड मह लेइजाए
७. के कृस त्रिताके दिहल संवत् १७६४
८. साल माह भाद्र वदि २ रोज ४ मोक -
९. म पालपा सुभम्

(१२)  
**श्रीराम**

स्वस्ति श्रीस्वरचरणस्मरणपूर्वक रूपनारायणेत्यादि विविध विरूदावलि  
विराजमान मानोन्नत श्री मन्महाराजाधीराज श्री श्री श्रीमन्मुकुन्द सेन  
बहादुर देवानां सदासमर विजयिनाम्  
आगे परमानंद जैसी के बाधा दिहल भेत सीमस्या वासोनो मसु-  
कट्टी तेकर रूपया एक हजार एक से अठार १११८ जब दाम रूपैया  
दशमासि जेव दाम तव बाधा छटैमि।  
वैसाख १५, १८०८ साल मुकाम जेन्नह शुभ

(१३)  
**श्रीराम**

स्वस्ति श्री स्वर चरणस्मरणपूर्वक रूपनारायणेत्यादी विविधविरूदावलि  
विराजमान मानोन्नत श्री मन्महाराजाधिराज श्री श्री श्रीमन्मुकुन्द सेन  
बहादुर देवानां सदा समर विजयिनाम्  
आगे परमानंद पाध्याके भेत गुमडहाहान मुरा २ सय डिहि समेत  
वृत्ति सदर्थ के तेकर सिवान पूर्ववोर वितासाध परिचम  
वोर साल वोटयाक सांध उत्तरवोर विदि ञाला सांध के  
दिहल १८२० साल चैत्र शुदि ४ रोज ६ मुकाम प्रभास शुभम्

(१४)  
**श्रीराम**

पत्रराहि

१. स्वस्ती श्री श्री माहाराजाधीराज युवराज श्री
२. श्री मन्मा (हा) दत्ता सेन देवानां सदा समर वी -
३. जइनाम्
४. रामु पाध्याको डहर चापाको वोट ठाठी
५. थीको रइकर भयो तेस्को साटो वीरवाका
६. सीराहानको बस्या विता भयो समत
७. १८२६ ----- साठो भयो बढी च-
८. इत्र १० मुकाम कीसनवारी सुभं

(१५)  
श्रीराम

पत्रराहि

१. स्वस्ति श्रीस्वरचरणस्मरण पूर्वक रूपनारायणेत्यादि
२. विविध विरूदावली विराजमान मानोन्नत श्रीमहारा -
३. जाधिराज कुमार युवराज श्री श्री श्रीमन्महादत्त सेन
४. देवानां सदा समर विजयिनाम्
५. आगे कृस्नानंद धिमिन्याकन तेगारामका आयल
६. मध्य रानीसेरामाहा मुरी ४० चालीस भेत रूपत्रा
७. २०० दुई शयका वाधा दीया चलन दश मासी
८. संवत् १८२७ मिति माघ सुदी ८ रोज ५ मुका -
९. म गजकोटटार शुभं

(१६)  
श्रीराम

पत्रराहि

१. स्वस्ति श्रीस्वरचरणस्मरणपूर्वक रूपनारायणेत्यादि वि -
२. विध विरूदावलि विराजमान मानोन्नत श्रीमन्महाराजा -
३. धिराज श्री श्री श्रीमन्महादत्त सेन बहादुर देवानां सदा स-
४. मर विजयिनाम्
५. आगे कासिराम जैसि के परिदारि दिहल तेक -
६. र पायेन १०० मुरि भेत जागीर और देस मांहां परि -
७. दारकै पायेन साविक मरि हाक बुटबलि सायेर मे -
८. साविक पायेन दिहल आपन पात्रीजमासे पाहि मिति पौष त-
९. पिजम तमे हाजिर रहै सन ११६४
१०. दि ८ रोज ४ मुकाम प्रभास सुम्भ  
छेउमा- विजैसिके आयल हुदसे मे १०० मुरि दिहल

(१७)  
**श्री राम**

पत्रशही

स्वस्ति श्री स्वरचरणस्मरणपूर्वक रूपनारायणेत्यादि विविध विरूदावली  
विराजमान मामनोन्नत श्रीमन्महाराजाधिराज श्री श्री श्री मन्महादत्त  
सेन बहादुर देवानां सदा समर विजयिनाम्  
स्वस्ति श्री गोसाइ भुवनेश्वर चाथ के गेडीमे २०० मुरी छेत नाथ  
पालीवनमे सिधर  
घडेहारी सुधा कुश विता के दिहल आपन छात्रीजमासे विता छाही  
आसीवाँद  
देही छेतके सेवाना दधिनवर आचार्य के विता पूर्ववर कुला उत्तर  
किलो दुंगो  
पश्चिम छोलसि सांध गेडिके डिके साध पूर्वका गलछोलसी दधीन  
वर वोही छोलसी के सिर पश्चिम गहिरि छोलसी उत्तरवर दुर्मह  
साध छालि वनमे घडेहारि पश्चिम अज्यालके विता दधिन पैडा  
उत्तर ठीक पूर्व कहेल के रूप सांध के दिमहल सम्बत् १८५० साल  
वैशाख सुदी १२ रोज ४ मुकाम श्रीनगर शुम्भ

(१८)  
**श्री भवानि हाषकैशौ जयति**

पत्रशहि

१. स्वस्ति श्रीस्वरचरणस्मरणपूर्वक रूपनारायणेत्या -
२. दि विविध विरूदावलि विराजमान मानोन्नत श्रीम -
३. न्महाराजाधिराज श्री श्री श्रीमत्पृथ्वीपाल सेन बहा -
४. दुर देवानां सदा समर विजयिनाम्
५. आगे हिमामन्द उपाध्याके डुम्रि बोदयामे ६० मुरि
६. छेत डिके समेत कुस विता के दिहल छात्रीजमा
७. से विता छाहि विताया सरहमे गिजमत करे आ -
८. सिवाँद देहि तेकर सिवान पूर्व दधिन कुला सा-

६. ध दस मुरि राणी के परिचमवोर भट्टराइके वि -
१०. तो सांध उत्तरवोर पैडा सांध डिहिके सांध
११. पूर्व भट्टराइ के विता के साधं परिचम ठिक सां -
१२. ध दधितवोर भट्टराइ के विता के सांध उत्तर -
१३. वोर वारके सांध के दिहल मुडिणोकमे येक घ -
१४. डेहारि तिन माना मकाइ जवेपा वारि समेत
१५. दिहल सवत् १८५१ साल कार्तिक सुदि ४ रो २
१६. मुकाम पाल्पा शुभं

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- 21 ऐतिहासिक सामग्री ३ संख्या
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- 25 ऐतिहासिक सामग्री ५ संख्या

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सुविधाबाट वन्चित रहेको छ । यसबाट त्यस भेकमा सिंचाइको विस्तार-कार्यक्रम ठप्प भएको देखिन्छ।

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## बज्रवाराही जात्रा : एक परिचय

सुरीला मानन्धर

काठमाडौं उपत्काका तीन शहरहरूमध्ये दोस्रो शहर ललितपुरको मल्लकालीन दरबार क्षेत्र मंगलबजारबाट करिब १० किलोमिटर <sup>१</sup> दक्षिणमा चापागाउँको प्रमुख बजार अवस्थित छ। यो गाउँ पूर्वमल्लकालीन शहर हो। <sup>२</sup> यस चंपापुर (चापागाँउ) राजा नान्यदेवका द्वितीय उत्तराधिकारी नानसिंहदेवको शासनकाल ने.सं. १११ मा पाटनका दुई मल्लहरू - राजमल्लदेव र काठ्यामल्लले निर्माण गराएका थिए। <sup>३</sup> सोही बजारको पूर्वोत्तरकोणमा एक रमणि हराभरा बनमा बज्रवाराही माईको मंदिर अवस्थित छ। गजूर रहीत प्यागोडा शैलीमा निर्मित यस मंदिरभित्र रास कुनै प्रतिभा स्थापना गरिएको छैन, केवल केही ढुंगाहरू र एक लाम्बो आकारको कुण्ड रहेका छन्। परापूर्वकालमा सो कुण्ड एक फोहर नाली थियो, जहाँ एक सुंगुर (वाराही) खेलीरहेको समयमा कुनै एक बोलाहाले त्यसमाथि बन्चरो प्रहारगरी घाइते पारिदिएको हुँदा उक्त वाराही सोही स्थानमा सिद्ध भई बज्रवाराही माईस्थानको उत्पत्ति भएको थियो भन्ने किंवदन्ति रहिआएको छ। सोही भनाई अनुरूप हालसम्म पनि त्यस मंदिरमा रास देवी प्रतिमा नभई ढुगा र कुण्डलाई नै, पूजा गरिँदै आएको छ।

प्रतिवर्ष वर्षमा २ पल्ट यस बज्रवाराही माईको सटजात्रा गर्ने चलन छ। उक्त दशैजात्राहरूमा सुनजलप लगाइएको धातुबाट निर्मित वाराही प्रतिभा <sup>३</sup> गजूरयुक्त सटमा प्रतिस्थापन गरी नगर परिक्रमा (चंपापुर : / पुर- सहर) गराइन्छ। सो मूर्ति करिब १.१/२ फिट अग्लो र १ फिट चौडा छ। चार बाहुयुक्त महिष वहान गरेकी उक्त मूर्ति नृत्यमुद्रामा रहेको छ भने दुईहात मुद्रापूर्ण एवं दाहिने पट्टीमा एक हातमा सङ्ग (हाल विंदमात्र बाँकी) र दायाँ पट्टीको उक्त हातमा माछा सुरोभित रहेको छ। प्रतिमाको मुखमण्डल वाराही रहेता पनि शरिर मानवाकारको छ। आभुषणको हकमा शिरमा मुकुट, कानमा कानपासा, गलामा नरमुण्ड र अन्य हारहरू, जीउँमा सिंगारिएको जामा एवं हातमावाला र खुट्टामा वगी पहिरिएको छ। <sup>४</sup>



जात्रा गरिने Original मूर्तिको फोटो  
(सौजन्य:- नेपाल राष्ट्रिय संग्रहालय, छाउनी)

यस देवीलाई संपन्नताका प्रतीक एवं भूतप्रेत, मसान समेतलाई बसमा राख्ने अभूतपूर्व राक्ति स्वरूप मान्छन भने भक्तलाई कृने प्रकारको आपत्ति, व्यथा, भय र शत्रुको कुदृष्टिबाट बचाउने एवं भक्त जनको मनोकांक्षापूरा गरिदिने माहामाता र शरणदाताका रूपमा मानि आएका छन् भन्ने कुरा निम्न स्तुतिगानबाट बुझिन्छ :

### जय देवी वाराही

जयदेवि वाराही उत्तवुंस विजयाक सुय प्येम्ह यागिनिया मुलें ॥  
 हादे विविन विदया वनट वसलपादिल वसः गुगुलि मुसाननं उल ॥१॥  
 हादे परिवाल सरपाल वागराज, जवस अगेन भूत गन वार ॥  
 वागसिध संमुक परिवाल वानरः दिगपाल चौरांद दिल ॥२॥  
 वहामन मेस गसे तिलहील नानातसे, नागर जग्गे प्रविवेस ॥  
 हादे सुवर्ण पालया धंगलि निलकंथ कृदंल मानिक तिल ॥३॥  
 हादे थथिइन स्वदुन भगती वर नदासः वल फोसेचोने रवव संसार ॥  
 हादे कोतिया लुनवस वस मरुजोति जुलः भयविल सतुरिया मुल ॥४॥  
 हादे जि पापिया दुर जुल सहायफतः मन उधार गथेइर ॥  
 दुरजनया मति जुल गति मदयकेतनः रीशेस्वरी गुम्ह गुहाको सवास ॥५॥  
 थकाछुने जि लहाजोरे मथन यासेः आननदं जुयकं लास ॥  
 मेवमदु जि आरा भवानि चरनदासः मनरथ पुरेहे इसेग्र ॥६॥  
 मात्रिका गजलेखा नेपाल संवत् श्रावण येकादसिया दिन ॥  
 चौदस भुवनया अधिपति लोमसनिः हुने छेलिकोस वास ॥७॥  
 हरालक्ष्मी देवी भवानि चरणदासः गुगुलि साार जुल मन ॥  
 भजपति भूपति नरपति श्री जयेः भये विल सतुरिया मुल ॥८॥ 5

जात्रामा माथि वर्णन गरिएको मूर्ति खटमा राखि नगर परिक्रमा (पुर-शहर चंपापुर गराईन्छ। यसरी मंदिरमा राख मूर्ति स्थापना नभए पनि आकर्षक मूर्तिको खटजात्रा गर्नु र एकै देवीको वर्षमा २ पल्ट जात्रा संचालन गर्नु स्थानिय संस्कृतिका विशेषता मान्न सिकन्छ। यी विशेषताहरू बारे बेग्ला बेग्लै लोकधारणाहरू पाइन्छन्। चैत्र महिनामा मनाउने जात्रा देवीको जन्मोत्सव स्वरूप त मंसिर महिनामा मनाइने जात्रा देसार जातीहरूले देवीलाई आफ्नो मातहता लिन सफल भएको खुशियालीमा मनाइने जात्रा हो भन्ने लोक धारण छ। जस्तै :

(१) चैत्र महिनाको जात्रा वा सिंदुर जात्रा

प्रत्येक वर्ष चैत्र सुदि चतुर्दसी देखि ३ दिनसम्म मनाइने वज्रवाराही जात्रा राजा अरिमल्लदेवले संचालन गरेका हुन भन्ने स्थानीय जनविश्वास रहेको छ। राजा अरिमल्लदेव यात्रामा निस्कंदै यस गाउँमा देवा स्वयंमले आफ्नो साक्षात रूप दर्शन दिई सोही अनुरूपको एक मूर्ति निर्माण गराई वर्षेनी जात्रा संचालन गराईदिनु भन्ने आज्ञा भएको हुँदा राजा अरिमल्लले सो मूर्ति निर्माण गर्न लगाई चैत्र सुदि चतुर्दसीका दिन पणिष्ठा गरी यसै दिनेदेखि तीनदिनसम्म देवीको जन्मोत्सव स्वरूप प्रत्येक वर्ष धुमधामसंग जात्रा चलाउने चलन चलाएका थिए भन्ने लोकधारणा छ। यसकारण हालसम्म पनि राजाशा (पहिले द्वारेको, हाल प्रधान पंचको) लिएर यो जात्रा संचालन गर्ने प्रचलन छ।

माथि उल्लेखित भनाई अनुसार यो जात्रा नेपालमा मल्ल शासनको शुरू ६ देखि संचालन हुँदै आएको मान्नु पर्छ। तर धातु निर्मित प्रतिभा, यसको तडकभडकपूर्ण सिंगार र आभुषण एवं नृत्यमुद्रा र तान्त्रिक भावलाई हेर्दा यो प्रतिमा मल्लकालको प्रारंभ तिरको जस्तो देखिदैन, बरु उत्तर मल्लकालको कलाकृति प्रतित हुन्छ। पुरातत्वविदहरूले पनि यस मूर्तिलाई सत्रौं शताब्दी भन्दा पहिलेको नभएको अनुमान गरेको छन्। ७ यदि यो कला विक्रम संवत्को सत्रौं शताब्दीका हो भने यो जात्रा ने.सं. ६५० देखि ने.सं. ६८० सम्म काठमाडौंका शासक रहेका अमर मल्ल (नरेन्द्र मल्ल) को शासनकालमा शुरू गरिएको अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ। किनकि उनी वि.सं. १६१७ सम्म शासन गर्ने अर्थात् सोही शताब्दीको अन्ततिर देखि सत्रौं शताब्दीका भन्ने २ दशक सम्म शासक रहेका थिए। ८ साथै उनी एक कला एवं संस्कृति प्रेमी व्यक्ति थिए र उनले आफ्नो शासन कालमा काठमाण्डौ, भक्तपुर र ललितपुरमा अनेकन जात्रा र नाचहरू संचालन गराएका थिए भने अर्कोतर्फ उनको शासनकालमा “चापगाउँ” उनको मातहतमा रहेको थियो। ९ तर यस अनुमानलाई पनि निम्न श्लोकले गलत सिद्ध गर्दछ-- “भूपति, नरपति, अष्टमातृका - रवते संवत्स उत्पति जुसे विजयाकम्ह जयदेवी वारामही” १० यस श्लोकमा उल्लेख भएको अकनिष्पट्ट अनुसार देवीको उत्पति अर्थात् मूर्ति निर्माण काल ने.सं. ८११ हुन आउँछ। तर ऐतिहासिक प्रमाण अनुसार यस संवत्मा अरिमल्ल वा अमरमल्लको

शासन नभई काठमाण्डौ, भक्तपुर र ललितपुरमा क्रमशः भूपालेन्द्र मल्ल, जितामित्रमल्ल र योगनरेन्द्र मल्लले राज्य गर्दै थिए। यदि देवीको जन्मदिन अर्थात् मूर्ति निर्माणकाल ने.सं ८११ लाई मान्ने हो भन्ने यी ३ राजाहरूमध्ये कुनै एकले मूर्तिनिर्माण गर्न लगाएको र जात्रा चलाएका अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ। विवाद र जनविश्वास जे सुकै होस भाषावंशावली अनुसार पाटनका राजा श्रीनीवास मल्लले चंपापुरका बज्रबाराही देवीको सूनको मूर्ति बनाई संवत् ७८६ चैत्र शुक्ल ८ सोमबारका दिन विश्वनाा अर्ज्याले प्रतिष्ठा गराई एकादशी वृहस्पतिवारका दिन ललितपुर शहर घुमाई जात्रा गरी चंपापुर लागि राखे भन्ने छ। <sup>११</sup> हाल सम्म पनि यो जात्रा सोही तिथि मितिमा संचालन हुँदै आएकोले यो जात्रा श्रीनिवास मल्लले चलाएको प्रमाणित हुन्छ।

यो जात्रा चक्रगुठी र रतगुठी नामक २ गुठीहरूबाट संचालन गरिन्छ। हुनत यो जात्राका प्रमुख दिनहरू चैत्र सुदि चतुर्दशी देखि ३ दिन सम्म हुन्छन्। तापनि यसको पूजा विधि एकादशी कै दिनदेखि शुरू भइसकेको हुन्छ। एकादशीका दिन चक्र गुठीका कानपक्ताहरू जाडयुक्त ५ ध्याम्पाहरू र वोकावली सहितको पूजा लिई गाउँमा आउछन् उनीहरूले सो व्याम्पाहरू गाउँको इराटोल, भन्सारटोल, यकोटोल, भगवती टोल र भैरव मंदिरमा स्थापना गरी भैरवको साधना गरिन्छ। यसरी जात्रा भन्दा अघि नै भैरवको आरधना गरी पूजा किन गरीयो भन्ने संदर्भमा एक रोचक लोक विश्वास रहेको छ की आफ्नो सौतेनी आमाद्वारा सताइएकी स्थानीय बालकुमारी एक दिन सौतेनी आमाको आज्ञा अनुसार केराउवारीमा पहरा दिइरहेकी समय द्रयांगा भैरव मानवरूपधारण गरी आई उक्त दुःखि कन्यासंग गान्दर्भ विवाह गरी लगेका थिए। यस्कारण स्थानीय निवासी हरूले हालसम्म पनि भैरवालाई आफ्नो जवाई मानि आफ्नो गाउँको प्रमुख जात्रामा यसरी निम्ता दिने गरेको छ।

भैरवको साधना र आरधना पछि चतुर्दशीको रात स्थानीय रतगुठीका गुठीयारहरूले आगछ्बाट (देवीघर) देवी प्रतिमा रतमा स्थापना गरी बोकेर स्थानीय पोडे टोलमा लगिन्छ। त्यहाँ पोडेहरूद्वारा सुगुर वली चढाई जात्राको प्रथम पूजा अर्पण गरिन्छ। यस पछि रत समेत स्थानीय मंदिरमा स्थापना गर्न ल्याउँछ। यसदिन देखि जात्राको सुभारंभ हुन्छ। रास गरेर स्थानीय नेवार समुदयाले यस दिन

बेलुकादेसि भात खांदेनन, छोयलाभूको नाममा भोज खाने गर्छन। छोयलाभूमा खास मिठो परिकार बनाइदैन, केवल पोलेर वा उसिनेर सांघेको वा काचै साधेका परिकारहरूसंग च्यूरा खाने गर्छन। यस भोजमा खास गरेर च्यूरा, कांचो अदुवा, भुटेको कालो भटमास, मुला, बोडी, सानो केराउ, कुनै प्रकारको साग र पोलेको मासु (हाकु छोयला) वेग्ला वेग्लै सांघेको र केराउको वारा नै यस भोजको खास परिकार हुन्छन्। नेवार संस्कृति अनुसार यो एक प्रकारको सुद्धि कर्म मानिन्छ। नेवारहरू भातलाई जुठो मान्छन्। यस्कारण यस दिन भात खाँदा छोइएका भाँडाकुडाहरू सफा गर्ने, लुगा धुने घरभरी लिपपोत गरी सफासुघर गर्ने र त्यसपछि भात नपकाउने गर्दछन्।

भोलीपल्ट विहानै देखि स्थानीय निवासीहरूले आ-आफ्नो गच्छे अनुसार देवीलाई पूजा अर्चना गर्दछन्। कसैले वली पूजा गर्दछन् त कसैले साधारण समय बजी १२ वा नैवद्य मात्र राखि पूजा गरेको हुन्छ। धेरै जसोले सगून दिने गर्दछन्। वलीपूजा गर्नेहरूले कोतः (थालजस्तो वाटुलो पूजाथाली) वा कलः (वास्केट आकारको पूजा गर्ने भाँडो) मा पूजा राखिरहन्छन् भने अन्यले साधारण थालिमा पूजा ख्याउने गर्दछन्। यसै दिन मध्याह्नतिर सरकारी तवरबाट जटावाल नरिवल सहितको पूजा ख्याइन्छ। उक्त पूजा अर्पण गरी परंपराअनुसार द्वारले (हाल प्रधान पंचले) जात्रा संचालन गर्ने आदेश दिइन्छ। अनि राः गुठीका १६ जना गुठीपारहरूले खट बोकी नगर परिक्रमा गराइन्छ। यस कार्यक्रममा स्थानीय वासिन्दाहरू आ-आफ्नो सांस्कृतिक बाजागाजा सहित संलग्न भई जात्राको शोभा बढाउँछन्। उंगोलहरू धाः धिमेय, भूस्याः, ताः, वासुरी, वै, काः नायसि आदि बजाउँदै खटको पछि लाग्छन् भने भजनमण्डलीका सदस्यहरू हारभोनियम र तबलाको तालमा देवीको स्तुतिगान एवं भजन गाउँदै जुलुसमा सामेल हुन्छन्। यसका अलावा यस जात्रामा विशेष पूजा गर्दा र देवीको खट निश्चित ४ दोबाटोहरूमा पुग्दा पहेरेजातीले बजाउने पंचेवाजा (सहनाई, मृदंगा, तबला, धोलक आदिको संयुक्त वाजा) अनिवार्य रूपमा बनाउने गर्दछन्। जात्राको शोभा यात्रामा सिंदुर र लावा अविर छर्दै लग्नु पर्ने हुनाले यस जात्रालाई सिनः जात्रा (सिंदुर जात्रा) पनि भनिन्छ। यो जात्रा रातीसम्म जारी रहन्छ। यस दिन जात्राको प्रमुख दिन मानिन्छ र संपूर्ण आफन्त एवं चेलीबेटी बोलाई विहान समयवजी र बेलुकी आ-आफ्नो गच्छेअनुसारको परिकारहरू मिठाई, दही आदि राखी भोज खाने गरिन्छ। यो जात्रा संपन्न गरिसकेर भोलीपल्ट खट पुनः आगँछेय फिर्ता ख्याइन्छ।

आगंछुपेंका कर्माचार्य पूजारीहरूका दुइजना जेठी (थाकुली र नकुली नकीहरू) सधवा पूजारीनीहरूले विधिपूर्वक पूजागरी देवी प्रतिमा आगंछेय भित्रायाइन्छ। प्रतिमा पूजारीहरूको हवाला गरी सकेपछि मूल जात्रा टुगिन्छ। अनि छोरी र जवाई विदा गर्ने (बालकुमारी र भैरब) भनि रः गुठीका गुठीपारहरूले केही भोजलिई कुसले चौर सम्म जान्छन् र त्यहाँ सबभन्दा पहिले भैरब र बालकुमारीलाई भनि २ भाग भोज रारी अन्य गुठीपारहरू जेष्ठताको आधारमा लहरे वसी भोज राई फर्केने चलन छ। यसपछि संपूर्ण रूपमा यो जात्रा टुगीन्छ ।

### कार्तिक महिनाको जात्रा:

हरेक वर्ष कार्तिक महिनाको अष्टमी (गोपाअष्टमी वा भुरोः अष्टमी) देखि दरामी सम्म हुने यो दोश्रो जात्रा कहिले देखि (संचालन गरिएको थियो भन्ने कुनै ऐतिहासिक तथ्य हालसम्म प्राप्त छैन। तर यो जात्रा किन चलाइयो भन्ने संदर्भमा पाइएको लोकोक्ती अनुसार यो जात्रा चैत्र महिनामा गरिने जात्रा भन्दा पछि मात्र प्रचलनमा ल्याइएको अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ। किनकि वुलु गाउँ निवासीहरू बजबाराहीमा वनभोज मनाउन आउँदा देवी प्रतिमालाई पूजा गरी २ युवतीहरूलाई देवीको संरक्षक स्वरूप राखि अन्य सबै जंगलमा भात पकाउन व्यस्त रहेको थिए। यस समयमा स्थानीय देसार जातका युवकहरूले केही चतामरी (चामलको पीठो बाट बनाइएको रोटी) देसाँउदै “भावा कायकी पापा ?” (देवी लिन्छो की रोटी ? ) भन्दै जिस्काउन आएका थिए। भोकले चूर ती युवतीहरूले आफ्नो कर्तव्यको पर्वाह नगरी रोटीलाई चुनेको हुँदा युवकहरूले रोटी उनीहरूलाई दिई देवी प्रतिमा आफ्नो मातहतमा लिएर हर्षोलासकासाथ जात्र गर्दै नगर परिक्रमा गराएका थिए। यही सुरीयालीको स्मरण स्वरूप हालसम्म पनि देसार जातिले मंसिर अष्टमी देखि दरामी सम्म यो जात्रा मनाउँदै आएको छ। यस किम्वदन्ती अनुसार यो जात्रा मूर्ति निर्माण भइसकेपछि मात्र संचालन गरिएको हो भन्ने प्रमाणित हुन्छ।

परंपरागत संस्कृति अनुसार मुख्य अष्टमीका दिन वुलु गाउँका ६ जना नाइकेहरूद्वारा आगंछेयमा विधिपूर्वक देवीको पूजा गरी रातमा प्रतिमा पदार्पण गराइन्छ र त्यहाँबाट मंदिरमा ल्याई स्थापना गरिन्छ। यस दिन जात्राको प्रारम्भ मानिन्छ। भोलिपल्ट अर्थात् नवमीको दिन विहान देखि स्थानीय नेवारहरु विशेष गरेर देसार जातकाहरूले आ-आफ्नो क्षमता अनुसार पूजा अर्चना गर्दछन्। यस पूजाको समयमा गुठीपारहरूले मंदिर नजिकैको पाटीमा



“जातः बोयगु” (चिता प्रदर्शनी) कार्यक्रम संपन्न गरीन्छ। यस गुठीबाट संपूर्ण भक्तजनलाई एक एक वटा चतामरी र समयबजी प्रसाद स्वरूप प्रदान गर्ने गर्छन्। वुलु गाउँमा नेवारहरूले वनबाट खाने एक महिना अघिदेखि नै प्रतिव्यक्ति एकमाना चामलको हिसावले घरे पिच्छे कर उठाई राख्ने र यो दिन अन्य परिकार सहित भात पकाई सोही वनमा “मरः जा” को नाममा खाने गरिन्छ। साथै गुठीबाट वलिवैरय पूजाको नाममा करीव ५ पाथी चामलको भात पकाई अन्य परिकार सहित सजिसजाउका साथ एउटा बाघावली चढाई विधिपूर्वक भातलाई पूजा गरीन्छ र सो बली पूजा देवीको सटयात्रा पथहरू एवं गाउँको चारै दिशामा छर्दै का : वाजा बजाउँदै डुलाउँछन्। बाटोमा रहेका भूत प्रेत पन्छाउन र वर्ष भरी कृने प्रेतआत्माहरूले गाउँमा दुःख नदिउन भन्ने हेतुले यस्तो पूजा गरीएको हो भन्ने भनाई स्थानीय बुढापाकाका छन्। यसै दिनको सांझ देखि स्थानीय देसार जातका १६ जना युवकहरूले देवीको सट बोकी पहिलेको जस्तै जात्रा गरिन्छ। मंदिरबाट उठाई लगेको सो सट बजार स्थित डवलीमा विसान्दन्छ र त्यहाँ देसारजातका गुठीपारहरूले भव्य पूजाकासाथ अनेकन आभुषणले देवीलाई सजाइदिन्छन्। अनि जात्रा गर्दै नगर परिक्रम गराइन्छ।

यो दिन जात्राको प्रमुख दिन मानिन्छ र पलिहे जस्तै घरघरमा आफ्नो गच्छेअनुसारको भोज खाइन्छ। तर यस जात्रामा भने चैत्र महिनाको जस्तो संपूर्ण आफन्ताहरूलाई निम्त्याइँदैन। रातभर गाउँका विभिन्न घरको पूजा र सगुन थाप्दै उल्लास पूर्ण जात्रा गरिन्छ र भोलिपल्ट चैत्रमहिनामा जस्तै देवीलाई आगच्छेमा भित्र्याई जात्रा टुंग्याउँछ।

वर्षमा २ पल्ट गरीने यो देवीको जात्राहरू मध्ये एक जात्रा किन र कहिले देखि मनाउँदै आएको हुन र यसका सांस्कृतिक महत्व के कस्ता छन् भन्नेबारे केही किंवदन्तीहरू र ऐतिहासिक तथ्य पाइएका छन् अर्को जात्रा बारे ऐतिहासिकता खोजि गर्ने बाँकी नै छ। यस जात्राको सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक महत्व जति छ त्यतिकै मात्रामा सामाजिक र आर्थिक क्रियाकलापसंग पनि यसले सम्बन्ध राख्दछ। किनकि जात्राहरू स्थानीय जनताले आफ्नो व्यस्तताबाट पृथस्त पाएको समयमा देवी प्रति श्रद्धा भक्ती दर्शाउन र आफन्ताहरूसंग बसी आनन्द मनाउन चलाउँदै आएका प्रतित हुन्छ। यस कृषि प्रधान क्षेत्रका वासिन्दाहरू आफ्नो आर्थिक क्रियाकलापमा खेतमा-बारीमा व्यस्त रहँदा भक्तिभाव गर्न एवं आनन्द मनाउने र आफन्तलाई भेट्ने मौका नपाउनु स्वभाविक हो। यसकारण यी जात्राहरू यस्ता समयमा मनाइएका छन् जुन वेला की अधिकांश कृषकहरू व्यस्तताबाट

मुक्त हुन्छन्। जस्तै: एक जात्रा मंसिर महिनामा मनाइन्छ जुन समय धानबाली भित्रयाइसकेको हुन्छ। यसैले बालीबाट उत्पादित नयां चामलको भात प्रथमतः देवी र भूत प्रेतलाई चढाई सुख संवृद्धि र आरोग्यको कामना गर्नुका साथै बनभात खाने, भातलाई पूजा गर्दै बली पूजाको नाममा भात छर्कने, चतामंरी (चामलको पीठोबाट बनेको रोटी) वितरण गर्ने आदि गरिन्छ। अर्को जात्रा चैत्र महिनामा हुन्छ जुन समयमा गहुँवाली लहलहाउँदो अवस्थामा हुन्छ र खास काम गुनै पर्ने अवस्था हुँदैन। यसरी यो जात्राले स्थानीय साँस्कृति र परंपरासंग मात्र नभई त्यहाँका आर्थिक क्रियाकलापसंग पनि सम्बन्ध राख्दछ। यो जात्रा स्थानीय साँस्कृतिक संपदा हो र यसको साँस्कृतिक महत्त्व र ऐतिहासिकताको खोजी अभूत गहनरूपमा गर्न सके हालसम्म लुप्त रहेको यस क्षेत्रको अन्य कतिपय गौरवपूर्ण ऐतिहासिक एवं साँस्कृतिक तथ्यहरू समेत प्रकाशमा ल्याउन सकिने देखिन्छ।

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- 3 Danieal Wright, 1792 A.D. Histroy of Nepal, Kathmandu: Nepal Antiquated Book Pulishers: P. 167
- 4 यहाँ प्रस्तुत फोटो मूल (Original) प्रतिमाको हो। यो २०३४ सालमा चोरी भएको र स्थानीय निवासीहरू एवं प्रहरीको सक्रियताबाट सो मूर्ति फेलापारीएको थियो। हाल यो मुर्ति नेपाल राष्ट्रिय संग्रहालय छाउनीमा सुरक्षित रहेको छ। आजकल जात्रा गरीने प्रतिमा नवनिर्मित हो र यो ठूलोटाबाट बनेको छ।
- 5 सुरालि मानन्धर, "स्थानीय बजबाराही जात्रा : एक अध्ययन" (अप्रकाशित), २०३६।११।४ मा राष्ट्रिय विकास सेवा, त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालयमा प्रस्तुत भिलेज प्रोफाइलको दाश्रो खण्ड), परिशिष्ट नं. १, पृ. ७१-७२।

यो स्तुतीगान स्थानीय भजनमण्डल पुस्तिकाबाट अक्षरसः सारिएको छ। यो सोही गाउँ पंचायत वडा नं. ४ निवासी तुप्लला महर्जन वर्ष ६० को सौजन्यबाट प्राप्त गरेको हो।

- 6 Luciano Petech, 1958 A.D. Mediaval History of Nepal. Roma: Perte Medio Ed. Estrome Oriente: P. 85.
- 7 पुरातत्व विभाग एवं नेपाल राष्ट्रिय संग्रहालयबाट वर्गिकरण गरेअनुसार यो मूर्तिकला १७ रौं शताब्दीको मानिएका छ।
- 8 सूर्य विक्रम ज्ञवाली, २०१६ वि.स., नेपाल उपत्यको मध्यकालीन इतिहास, (८७६ ई.सं. देखि १७६८ इ.सं सम्म), काठमाण्डौ; रोयल नेपाल एकेडेमी: पृ. १२६
- 9 लिलाभक्त मुनकर्मी, २०४१ साल, नेपाल सांस्कृतिक तथा ऐतिहासिक दिगदर्शन, भक्तपुर; श्रीमती भवानी केशरी मुनकर्मी : पृ २४४।
- 10 वेलामा ताम्राकार, (अप्रकाशित) चापागाउँ आदर्श गाउँ पंचायत र त्यहाको नेवार समुदायले मान्ने गरेको चाडपर्व, (२०४३ सालमा रा.वि.से.मा प्रस्तुत भिलेज प्रोफाईल) पृ. ८४
- 11 देवी प्रसाद लंसाल, २०२३ साल, भाषा वंशावली, भाग २, काठमाण्डौ; राष्ट्रिय पुस्कालय, पृ ६६
- 12 चयूरा र स्यालवजीको साथमा कांचो अदुवा भुटेको कालो भटमास, उसिनेको बोडी, पोलेका मासु सांधरे बनाइएका ४ परिकारहरू र मासकोवारा राखि अर्पण गर्नुलाई समयवजी भनिन्छ। यसरी अर्पण गर्नु पनि एक प्रकारले वली पूजाने मानिन्छ। विस्तृत जानकारीका लागि हेर्नुहोस्-- सुरेन्द्रमान श्रेष्ठ, ने.सं. ११०५, "हाम्रो संस्कृतिमा समयवजीको महत्त्व" नेपालका तान्त्रिक देवता र तान्त्रिक पूजा (नेपाल भाषा), काठमाण्डौ; बलदेव जुजु र सुरेन्द्रमान श्रेष्ठ : पृ. १०-१७

Research Note

## *A Note on the Religious Beliefs and Practices Among the Chepang of Nepal*

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This paper deals with the social functions of religion i.e. the contribution that it makes to the formation and maintenance of a social order and social cohesion.

### **Ethnographic Setting**

The particular group chosen for study is the Chepangs living in the Mahabharat ranges of Central Nepal, West of Kathmandu. This paper is based on field data collected in Mahadev Panchayat, Dhading District during April to September 1984. The Chepangs at present are known by the name of 'Praja' or 'Paraja'<sup>2</sup> the subjects of the king. They are a small group of a Tibeto-Burman language speaking people from the Mongoloid family who numbers about thirty-two thousand, distributed mainly in various hill village Panchayats of Chitawan, Gorkha, Dhading, and Makawanpur districts. They live along the steeper slopes of the Mahabharat range between altitudes of 2500 and 4000 ft. above sea level. The area is not easily accessible because of its precipitious mountain trails.

The Chepangs, like the people of many other ethnic groups of Nepal, believe in an unknown supernatural world. They have evolved a system of beliefs and practices through which they have established a close relationship with spirits who are believed to influence the destinies of mankind. They have inherited these beliefs and practices from their ancestors through which they enter into relation with various deities and spirits for their livelihood, security and prosperity. These beliefs and practices help to strengthen their social unity and contribute to the existence and maintenance of problems of survival for the primitive peoples like the Chepangs. In this context, the following questions were formulated:

- a. How do these beliefs help the Chepangs to survive in the infertile, drought-prone region of hill and forests?
- b. How do these protect the Chepangs from epidemics, wild animals, sickness and other calamities?
- c. In what way are the seasonal rites and festivals considered essential for ensuring the safety and prosperity of individual and the village community?

- d. Who should be the effective agent to mediate between the Chepang community and the supernatural powers?

### Supernatural Powers

As is the case with other primitive societies, the Chepangs are preoccupied with and predominated by their own faiths and beliefs. They believe in some invisible supernatural beings and powers. Their beliefs in these powers and the ways of entering into relations with them constitute their religion. Their relationship with these supernatural spirits is one of veneration, fear, meekness, dependence, and propitiation. So various spirits are invoked to obtain their goodwill. "They believe in a type of religious magic, and by beating drums they call on their dead ancestors and their gods, both good or evil. They believe that the destinies and fortunes of mankind are influenced by supernatural spirits" (Caughley et al. 1971: 85). For the Chepangs the world is a vast sacred amphitheatre in which men, spirits, and impersonal powers are closely interrelated. "They are known as the most advanced exorcists (*Jhankris*) among all the communities of Nepal. Their superstitions go to such an extent that any malady, physical weakness, natural calamities like droughts, excessive rainfall, damage to crops, and so on are supposed to be the result of either the evil desire of the witches or that of the evil spirits. To do away with all these evils they beat drums throughout the night, chanting incantations and jumping up and down" (Varya 1971). But it is evident that these various beliefs and practices permeate every aspect of their life and help strengthen their social unity. They believe that mountains, rivers and trees are inhabited by various powers. It is very important for every household and village community to cultivate friendly relations with such supernatural powers, which is done through oblations and sacrifices. So the sole object of their worship is to avert disasters. When these spirits are pleased they bring delight and happiness to them.

### Discussion

An attempt has been made to analyse some of the deities and spirits prevalent among the Chepangs and how their faiths and practices are closely related to their life-cycle ceremonies, seasonal festivals, and agricultural practices.

### The Deities

The Chepangs worship a variety of deities. Of these the worship of *Namrung* (the hunting god), *Bhumi-Puja* (the earth deity) and *Gaidu-Puja*<sup>3</sup> (worship for livestock) are considered most important.

The *Namrung* is a hunting god. As the Chepangs are hunters, hunting is essential for survival. Besides, it is believed that hunting should be done at least once a year otherwise the god *Namrung* may get infuriated and hurt people by bringing miseries. On a stipulated date after offering a chicken a group of Chepangs set out for hunting into the

jungle hoping for a successful hunt. Even after their successful hunt, they propitiate *Namrung* by offering the blood from the heart of the animal for their well-being. This adoration with the offerings is performed to tranquilize their hunting god. So the pleasure of *Namrung* facilitates hunting pursuits, provides the hunted object with ease and protects people from epidemics and other calamities.

The Chepangs observe *Bhumi-Puja*, the earth deity, before they sow maize in March. This propitiation is an agricultural festival which is to be observed by all for a rich agricultural production. The expectation of successful agricultural harvest in the coming year is the underlying belief of this ceremony. Unless the earth deity is appeased it is believed that crops will be ruined, and also misfortunes of various kinds will be brought upon them. So they make two small holes in the ground and fill one with the blood of a rooster and the other with water. They believe that if the substance of the holes remains as it is for a long time, they can predict favourable agriculture in the coming year. If the substance dries up soon it shows a negative impact in the agricultural production. So a good agricultural cycle is the sole desire of the Chepangs while worshipping *Bhumi-Puja*.

The Chepangs observe *Gaidu* and *Aitbare-Puja*.<sup>4</sup> The *Gaidu-Puja* is observed by the Chepangs for the security and prosperity of cattle. It is observed during October-November. *Aitbare-Puja* is observed to keep them safe from epidemics, and it is observed around August-September. Both of them are supposed to be the benevolent gods. So they are considered important. Propitiation takes place generally with offerings of fowls, handfuls of rice and vermillion.

The worship of the above mentioned deities such as *Namrung Bhumi-Puja*, *Gaidu*, and *Aitbare* are essential for survival in the infertile hills and inspire the Chepangs to live happily in the midst of epidemics, wild animals, sickness and other calamities.

### Life-Cycle Ceremonies and Related Deities

Rites of birth, marriage and death are the main rites of passage. In Hinduism, these are called the *Samskāras*. "The word, *samskāra* means religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and the intellect of an individual so that he becomes a full member of the community" (Dahal 1985: 83). Among the Chepangs there is no such term for *samskāra* which is observed from the moment of the *garbha-dhana* (conception) to *antesthi* (death) of the individual. However, they also observe some of the ceremonies related to birth, name giving, food introducing, head shaving, marriage, and burial. After the performance of some of the ceremonies such as name-giving, food-eating, head-shaving, and marriage, a child acquires a definite status in the village and among its kin-folks. Besides, the funeral rites help the departed spirit to liberate itself from the underworld and to finally join the abode of its ancestors.

On the name-giving day, the Chepangs sprinkle cow's urine to purify the house and family members. The name of a child is chosen by the parents and the child is immediately fastened with a yellow thread around the wrist and waist to protect from evil spirits. They observe a simple ceremony at the time of the first food-giving to the child. On this occasion, the parents of the child and others relatives give *tikā* on the forehead of the child and wish it a long and happy life. They observe a first hair-cutting ceremony. The hair of the child is shaved by his maternal uncle. A man in the Chepang community achieves full status after his marriage. They consider marriage as indispensable and very much essential for fecundity. When a person dies, before carrying the dead body to the burial ground, it is ceremonially placed on the ground, and oil is rubbed all over its body. Coins are placed by sons on the mouth the deceased. This is done in order to help the soul to pay the fees while crossing the river on the way to the land of the dead.

During the observation of these rituals and ceremonies, villagers get together and worship their ancestors, deities and spirits, and entertain with various food items. On the last day of a funeral ceremony, villagers, especially the relatives of the polluted family, attend the ceremony with various food items such as *jāda*, local beer, fowl, pickle, and bread. The offerings such as beer, balls of boiled rice, meat, and cigarettes are put on banana leaves for the soul of the deceased. It is widely believed in the Chepang region that the departed soul comes and eats the offerings. This death ceremony brings the world of spirits into their affinity. Besides, it promotes the feeling of co-operation, discipline, and interdependence among the members of a community.

The above-mentioned life-cycle ceremonies possess specific, protective and purificatory purposes, and are essential for keeping, continuing and strengthening the relations of mutual harmony, peace and dependence between the individual and the whole community.

## Festivals

The Chepangs observe various seasonal festivals which are considered helpful for ensuring the safety and prosperity of the individual and the village community. Many of the Chepang festivals are similar to the Hindu such as *Dasain*, *Dīpāwalī* and *Samkrānti*.

*Sāune-Samkrānti* is an important festival and has a separate and indigenous identity among the Chepangs. Almost all the Chepangs undergo punishment from hunger each year from *Fālgun* to *Asada*. During this period they depend mainly on jungle products such as *pas* (*vyagur*), *hung* (*Bharlang*), *goi* (*yam*), *lak* (*Githa*) and *jyar* (*chuinya*). Their agricultural production is expected to maintain them hardly for six months from *Sravan* to *Pausa*. However, the new crops are ready for harvest around *Sāune-Samkrānti*. So this festival, which falls on 1st *Srāvan*, is observed each year on the happy occasion of their triumph of keeping themselves

alive despite the problem of acute food shortage, famine, and distress. So this festival is observed with a nice preparation of buffalo meat and *jāda*. On the other hand, *Māghe-Sāmkranti* which is observed on 1st *Māgh* is just the opposite to *Sāune-Samkranti* because it is connected with their coming sorrowful days of famine and distress. It is their belief that, since that day their food stock is supposed to be exhausted, they are supposed to go to jungle for food-gathering and face hardships. They enjoy themselves by feasting with their sisters as they are not sure whether they will meet together again in the coming year. This festival anticipates their coming sorrowful days of famine and distress which last from *Māgha* to *Srāvan*.

The Chepangs observe *Chhonam*<sup>5</sup> (*nwagi*) as a concluding rite after their main agricultural activities but *Bhumi-Puja* as an introductory or inaugural rite before agricultural activities. *Chhonam* (*nwagi*) is the most important festival of the Chepangs. It is related to their agricultural activity. *Chhonam* is the auspicious occasion on which a new harvest is eaten. The Chepangs are prohibited from eating some of their agricultural products such as *ghaiya*, *pindoula*, *ghniroula*, and sour fruits like *nibuwā* without making an offering to their ancestors. This festival falls on the full-moon during *Bhādra* and is generally observed on a stipulated date according to their convenience. Generally, each member of a clan gathers at the house of the oldest member in the village and observes it. This gathering is arranged at the house of *Pānde*, their priest, with a bunch of ripe rice plants, fruits, and *jāda*. One corner of the house is smeared with a mixture of cowdung and soil and many offerings like rice plants, banana, rice and other things are put on the ground. They offer incense and *diyo* (oil lamp). The *Pānde*, the priest, has his head shaved, takes a bath to purify himself and starts beating his *ringk* (one-faced drum); sitting on the sanctified mat then he begins his *falakne* (muttering) incoherently. He shudders a lot and invites the ancestors to a feast prepared from the new harvest. The next morning the *Pānde* stops beating the drum and sacrifices a cock for the ancestors. The Chepangs consider ancestors intermediate between gods and living men, and an intermediary role is played by the *Pānde*. The invitation to a feast from the new harvest and prohibition from eating certain agricultural products before offering them to their ancestors are the main features of this festival. So this festival is considered to be one of the factors which contributes towards ensuring the safety and prosperity of the individual and the village community.

The ancestor worship among the Chepangs is full of rituals in honour of the dead. They look up to their ancestors' spirits with filial love and intimacy. Like most primitive people they believe in survival of the soul after death. So they propitiate the spirits of ancestors, treat them with veneration and believe in their rebirth. In fact, their mediation for reconciliation is sought. They keep the memory of the dead alive. Among the Chepangs the living and the dead of the same lineage stand in a close relationship, forming one family. The dead are believed to assist in times of crisis. It is believed



that conventional tributes must be paid to them. Failure to do so may result in those generally benevolent becoming malevolent. It is almost a duty of the spirits of the departed to supervise the well-being of their living family members. So ancestor worship is a strong factor in the Chepang social solidarity and continuity of family life and tradition.

### Pande

For Chepangs a *Pānde* is just like a *Jhānkri* in other ethnic groups of Nepal. He is a key-person among the Chepangs, because his presence in most of the social and religious activities such as the name-giving ceremony for a new baby, worship of a clan deity, purification day, and many other significant occasions, is a must. If anybody is ill, the *Pānde* is invited to find out which god or ghost has caused sickness and to cure it by beating his one-sided drum. This beating continues for the whole night preventing the patient from sleeping (Caughley et al. 1971: 85). According to the instruction of the *Pānde*, one offers fowl, swine, and even goats wishing one's well-being. If a person falls sick the consultation is done soon with the *Pānde* and his instructions are accepted whole-heartedly. Not only are his services indispensable for propitiating gods and spirits, he himself is endowed with superhuman powers. His magico-religious practices come into operation for the diagnosis and treatment of all kinds of illness. They believe that sickness is caused by certain deities, such as spirits of witchcraft. They counteract it by exorcism. For all those purposes the *Pānde* invokes and propitiates various deities and ancestors. He is supposed to cure a patient by his spiritual incantation. In addition to this, he spells some incantation to poison the river water which helps the Chepangs to fish. If necessary he retrieves the effectiveness of poison if it is not strong enough with the touch of an impure woman or glance of an evil eye. Besides, his participation in hunting is lucrative and is honoured by an extra share after the group's successful hunt.

A *Pānde* has a filial affection with his one-faced drum called which is made from the wood of *buchiko-sing*, a kind of tree and the skin of a goat. According to the Chepang belief, the *Pānde* and his *ring* work as husband and wife who have promised to devote themselves to the well-being of the people. A *Pānde* is a self-made personality with blessings from god. "Exorcism is, however, neither taught nor learnt by anyone, as the teaching and learning of such arts are totally tabooed. They learn them by themselves when they are in bed in dreams, they are taught by their deities" (Varya: 1972).

A *Pānde* is an interceder between the dead and the living, a mediator between the Chepang community and supernatural powers and a central figure among the community members. His presence, in most of the socio-religious activities, plays an important role in keeping peace, prosperity and unity among the Chepangs. His magico-religious performances show how they are helpful and essential in maintaining social solidarity, to connect the present with the past and inspire members of the community to live together harmoniously.

## Conclusion

This paper shows that the religico-migical faiths and practices make the Chepangs optimistic and resistant to hostile forces of nature. Their faith, rituals, and magical rites keep them bold and fearless, and they are helpful in harbouring amiable and amicable connexions with the deities, spirits, and other supernatural powers deemed necessary for their existence.

The festivals and ceremonies of the Chepangs are occasions of community participation and reciprocity which help in maintaining their social order and social solidarity. In brief, the social functions of rites and ceremonies enable them to attract the natural forces into their favour and support. Besides, they are supportive in their vindication and power to encounter the natural environment, and these meet their survival needs. This descriptive functionalist analysis of the religion of the Chepangs shows similarity with Malinowski's (1948) theory of the social functions of religion which posits religion as part of a culture with certain functions for the fulfilment of human needs and for the provision of solutions to certain difficulties and problems. Besides this, the religious beliefs and practices of the Chepangs look clearly akin to what Redcliffe-Brown has expressed in regard to religion:

In all ages men have hoped that by the proper performance of religious actions or observances they would obtain some specific benefit; health and long life, children to carry on their line, material well-being, success in hunting, rain, the growth of crops and the multiplication of cattle, victory in war, admission of their souls after death to a paradise or inversely, release by the extinction of personality from the round of reincarnation. (Redcliffe - Brown, 1952: 153).

This paper shows that the entire circle of the Chepang life is dominated by religious beliefs and practices. All such beliefs and faith in supernatural power, the dependence of the Chepangs community on such power and their veneration of it constitute the structure of the Chepang religion.

## NOTES

1. I am grateful to Dr. D.R. Dahal for his encouraging comments and suggestions in preparing this article.
2. The term *Prajā* is applied to Chepangs, Kusundas, Darais, Kumhals, Majhis and Parghartis of Central and Eastern Nepal. *Prajā* is clearly a term which has been used along with ethnic names since at least the Malla period of Nepalese history (Rai, 1985: 1).

246 CNAS Journal, Vol. 14, No. 3 (August 1987)

3. Name of the god of cowherd (to whom milk and ghee are offered in worship on the full-moon day of Mangsir and Jeth) ef. *The Rising Nepal*, 14 July, 1971.
4. Name of a god and name of a ceremony performed on Sunday. ef. *The Rising Nepal*, 14 July 1971.
5. This tribal festival is widely prevalent among the Chepangs, and it is generally observed on different days in different hamlets.

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## Book Review

*Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in the Mahāyāna Tradition.* 1986. 2nd Edition. Diana Paul. 333 pages. University of California Press. Price: US \$ 8.95.

*Women and Colonization.* 1980. Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock (eds.). 339 pages. J.F. Bergin Publishers, New York: Price: US \$ 10.00.

*Women's Work.* 1986. Eleanor Leacock, et al. (eds.). 300 pages. Bergin and Garvey. Price: US \$ 16.95.

The zeal and the legal confrontations of the so-called women's liberation movement of the last decade has considerably waned. It has not left us with a dramatically different world, it seems. Our political systems are essentially patriarchal; our religious institutions seem as powerful and unshakable as ever; economic dilemmas and class divisions are as daunting as before; and basic divisions remain between those who have and those who have not.

Among those human problems that confront us on an ever increasing scale, the status of women may seem a minor matter. It is certainly a much weaker voice in the call for change and progress. Thus, those people who heard women's appeals and demands a decade ago may think that today's relative calm in this subject is a sign that it was a passing fashion, a tempest in a teapot, and a localized Western concern. If they do, they are wrong.

There is no doubt that women's consciousness and the liberation movement have changed. But they are far from faded. They remain strong and have become deeply embedded in our general social fabric. Nowhere is this more evident than in current literature, both fiction and non-fiction. Non-fiction today has a diverse and still emerging genre of writing, all inspired by women's thoughts about their history and culture-- their "being". A good proportion of current poetry, short-stories, humour (yes, humour), children's literature and novels express new feminism in one form or another. And it is profound, even entertaining at times.

In academic writing, a more conservative sphere of expression, feminism is being pursued just as energetically. The reason? A re-examination of all human history and culture is underway, from a revolutionary point of view. All philosophical and social theories are being subjected to new interpretations; all scientific conclusions are being reconsidered; facts are being uncovered which were never before considered worthy or significant. All these have to do with WOMEN.

At a recent United States-wide anthropology conference I attended, this movement was most evident in the display of new publications by leading academic presses. Every culture, every symbol, every language, every religious practice, is being examined and written about with the input of thousands of committed, articulate and concerned feminists.

Women thinkers are in the forefront of this wave but increasing numbers of men scholars are joining the ranks.

The books I review below, *Women in Buddhism*, *Women and Colonization*, and *Women's Work*, are not in the most recent list of important publications concerning women. I have selected them because of the diverse subjects they represent, and in two cases, their pioneering role in social science.

First is Diana Paul's *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in the Mahāyāna Tradition*. This was originally published in 1979 by Humanities Press. In 1986 it was reissued (U. of California Press) with some additions. (So many earlier books about women, from women, explorers to epistilary collections which were initially overlooked because of their marginal subject interest have been unearthed and are being reprinted today.).

*Women in Buddhism* remains one of the few books about Buddhims from the point of view of theology's interpretation of the feminine. Until its appearance, anyone interested in religion remained in ignorant silence when Buddhism was presented in lauditory terms in contrast to claims about women in Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. The latter great religious traditions are distinctly misogynist. Their doctrines not only define women's polluted status; all of them prohibit women from participating in the priesthood on an equal footing; most exclude them altogether. In contrast to the other religions, our general view of Buddhism was that it fosters egalitarian principles and we (wrongly) assumed this principle extended not only between classes but between the sexes. In fact, most scholars of Buddhism managed to completely exclude the question of the feminine from their volumes of discussions and translations of Buddhism. Until 1983, when a special issue of *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* (1983; 10:2/3), edited by K. Nakamura focused on women in Japanese religion, women clerics were also ignored. *Sangha* meant monks only.

This bias continues in the most carefully assembled scholarly publications. One of the most recent is a handsome, costly publication called *The World of Buddhism* (1984 Thames and Hudson), a volume which examines its proud traditions in a dozen countries where it is established. It is co-edited by eleven of the most eminent Buddhologists of our time. Yet, it mentions virtually nothing about Buddhist women sects or about Buddhist sutra and vinaya commentary on women. The same is of course true for the many volumes on Himalayan Buddhism now available.

Diana Paul's book was not consulted by any of those Buddhologists, it seems. But that is history. No future generation of scholars can ignore the Window she has opened upon the subject. Hopefully later scholars will pursue an even wider range of issues. But this book is an important and highly sophisticated start.

Paul's collection includes stories from 15 *sutra* and 3 different parts of the famous Lotus Sutra as well. She translates these (from Chinese and Indian sources) and examines them in terms of their various presentations of the feminine. The chapters are assigned as follows: Chapter 1, the "Temptress", Daughter of Evil; Chapter 2, The Mother; Chapter 3, The Nun; Chapter 4, Good Daughter and Good Friend: Teachers of the Dharma; Chapter 5, Bodhisattvas with Sexual Transformation; Chapter 6, Bodhisattvas without Sexual Transformation; Chapter 7, the Celestial Bodhisattva; Chapter 8, A Female Buddha?. The stories she analyses raise questions and suggest answers simultaneously.

The book succeeds in its attempt to deal with the question of gender and its relation to states of spiritual being and the potential for religious practice. Instead of proposing definite answers, Professor Paul presents tentative propositions against the cultural background of gender definitions for women and their degree of social acceptability. She comments not only on the negative but also on positive definitions of the feminine in the texts she analyses. Indeed she is able to propose that in Buddhist society gender roles and definitions were constantly changing and notions of sexuality and its relevance or irrelevance to religious practice have no definitive answer or consensus concerning Mahayana Buddhist literature. Like so much contemporary writing on 'the feminine' this book also is not a stick with which to whip the less well-informed. It is a fuller, more scientific and more mature view of the subject of Buddhism, a view we can only benefit from.

Among the many new analyses of women and religion which readers may wish to make note of, and which are related to Paul's work is a 1980 collection of papers (Harper and Row), *Unspoken Worlds*, edited by N. Falk and R. Gross. A forthcoming volume of *The Tibet Journal*, (Dharamsala, India) called "Women and Tibet" is a collection of papers which examine the Feminine in (Tibetan) Buddhism.

The second book under review here, *Women and Colonization* published in 1980 (J.F. Bergin Publishers, NY) is almost a classic now. Co-edited by Mona Etienne and the pioneer feminist who only recently passed away, Eleanor Leacock. This book is a collection of 12 papers. They were the first to document the now wellknown process by which western influences in Christianity and capitalism intervened in more classless egalitarian societies to create greater divisions and imbalances than the traditional societies themselves exhibited.

In recent years, researchers and administrators have shown us how foreign aid to developing nations gives advantages to men first, just as it creates power elites who are increasingly distant from their own peasant populace. This book, focusing on early missionary and capitalist influence in the Third World, shows the origins of this process.

The individual contributors to this volume write about societies they studied, cultures as diverse as one can imagine: the ancient Aztec, the Kiriwina of Melanesia, the Tlingit of British Columbia's northwest coast, the Baule of the West Africa Coast, the Seneca of New York and the Inca of Peru.

Each of these papers shows first that in the society under study, far more equality existed than missionaries, early travellers and anthropologists first recognized. Westerners still have a tendency to think of their own system as offering women the highest status, while assuming Asian, tribal or rural women are subject to more oppression, have greater male dependence, and experience more severe misogynistic views (with the exception of the occasional matriarchy). The authors of papers collected here knew this was wrong. They knew that women in the Montagnais, Seneca, Tlingit, American Indian Peoples and others whose history they document had earlier enjoyed considerable equal status and wealth, more than some women in developed societies. And they document how those balances changed as colonization encroached on each of them.

The view of most writers in this volume is that any power enjoyed by those women was largely due to their more central role in the economy, where the unit of production was the household. Where that economy broke down and capitalist forces intervened to move production into the hands of a class or an outside agent, the power of women was eroded. The same process occurred when Christian missionaries moved through the world and began to define the activities of their converts in terms of western models, moving women to new jobs, stressing her mothering role.

We also learn of cases where women appeared to maintain or improve their status under colonization. The extent to which colonial powers sought to modify indigenous political structures by direct intervention was variable from one society to another, but differential wealth and power based on commodity exchange and the unequal participation of individuals and groups in colonial political structure generally exacerbated pre-existing stratification or promoted its emergence in previously unstratified societies.

Where they were members of a precolonial or newly created elite, women could especially benefit from the colonial situation. There were short-term benefits to a minority in contrast to long term loss of status for a majority in the Aztec, the Inca and the Tonga societies. But it became apparent in many cases that social and economic security for the majority of women in colonized societies could most easily be attained through men. Then the introduced ideology that perceived women as sexual objects made them more valuable commodities. One result was the spread of women's sexual exploitation and their economic exploitation as cheap labour. There is even documentation here that women (Inca, and Seneca of NY) in some cases actively resisted colonization because they rightly perceived themselves the loser. In both these cases, women's defense of their collective interests was related to the defense of their society as a whole.

Because we know the impact foreign aid has on our social fabric and how the accompanying modernization process seems to create social divides, we may think that the resulting discrepancies that have been noted for women in the Third World are now under control. A UN Fund For Women was established with the specific aim of helping redress the balance. There

are women all over the world who are moving into a wealthier middle class due to increased prosperity. As a result, some argue that women benefit from foreign aid in their capacity as wives and mothers of a growing prosperous class. This will have some impact, no doubt.

We may forget a more fundamental lesson offered through these studies: that tourism, development, and foreign aid are children of colonization and Christianity. They are embedded with Christian principles and with capitalist values and views of how people improve their lot, of what progress is. If the process of inequalities is to be thwarted or reversed, those deeper elements have to be rejected. I do not see that happening. I have found it odd that so many consultants and administrators I speak to are not familiar with this book. Development experts and local administrators appear not to see these colonial and Christian forces at work in foreign aid programs. They ought to read this book. I should be interested in hearing their assessment of these arguments in view of economic processes and women's changing role underway in Nepal and parallel Asian communities today.

*Women's Work* is the last book under review here. Again this is a collection of several articles and again one of the co-editors is Eleanor Leacock. With Helen Safa and 13 other women historians and anthropologists, Leacock examines "economic development and the division of labour by gender".

The case studies presented here are wide-ranging: a discussion of Europe's industrial revolution on "childhood" as a market for family labour; uneven development in the USA before 1900; family planning and the division of labour in Singapore; changing models of production and the sexual division of labour in Nigeria's Yoruba society; Australian aboriginal women's love rituals; capitalist development and family migration in the Middle East; and others.

In some ways this study could be considered a natural development of the 1980 collection reviewed above. It is also an assessment of Ester Boserup's early pioneering study *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970, St Martin's Press). These studies in *Women's Work* examine the ramifications of both capitalism and socialism and document the changing relationships of class and gender. While many economic analyses trace the economic ramifications of these major movements, the authors of this book focus on the implications for women. Women are often the ones left on the land to cultivate while men join the urban work force; women are almost always paid less and become the cheapest labour force in the industrial process; women still bear the children and as such have that additional factor limiting their options to new economic opportunities.

Readers in Nepal and India who have direct experience with development process will recognize factors at work in the cases described in this book. It will not be new to them. What may be of worth is how widespread are these issues and how they are altered within the socialist



context. The examples of women's work in Cuba, China, Tanzania and the Soviet Union illustrate different kinds of forces operating which should be considered in any assessment of this important subject.

This book is one of numerous new studies which focus on gender the labour. This has become a major issue in the social sciences today. If any social fact is universal, it is the sexual division of labour. As a basic human experience, the division of labour is altered by economic forces in such ways that we can begin to appreciate the ways women as a class are always subject to forces slightly different than men. Division of labour by sex goes beyond any rationalizing about women as child bearers, or women as weaker beings, or women as house-bound. Women's labour is a paramount commodity, and different cultures devise different means of harnessing it.

In connection with the latter two books reviewed, mention should be made of two recent publications about women and Nepal. By women anthropologists with long experience in Nepal, both are in a new women's series from Westview Press.

One is Sidney Schuler's *The Other Side of Polyandry* (1987) about property, stratification and nonmarriage in the Tibetan-speaking community near Muktinath. There is a great deal of valuable information here on modern economy. Significant as well is the author's position on Buddhist values. Dr. Schuler takes issue with Buddhist literature which tends to romanticize and inflate the status of Tibetan women in contrast to that of the Hindu women in Nepal. My own research into women in Tibetan society supports Schuler's claims. And I expect we shall be hearing much more about this in years to come.

*Women's Informal Associations in Developing Countries* is the other noteworthy release from Westview (1986). One of its co-editors is Kathryn March who has been studying Tamang women for many years and we can expect publications emerging from those researches in the near future. Dr. March joins with Dr. Rachelle Taqu in this general discussion of the impact of development programs on women's informal associations. They look at credit, labour, ritual, and religious associations. They conclude, surprisingly, that mobilizing existing associations is often an inappropriate development strategy.

The price of these books, a consideration everywhere, varies. All are in paperback. Yet, the specialist books from Westview press, both slim volumes (200 pp and 154 pp) are almost US. \$20. each. Each of the 3 books reviewed in detail are closer to \$10. and are well worth that.

- Barbara N. Aziz